



all FOXES aren't SLUTS
we're aficionados
of ANATOMY

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A ROTTWEILER.

THEY'RE PRETTY BIG
ON BEING TOP DOG.

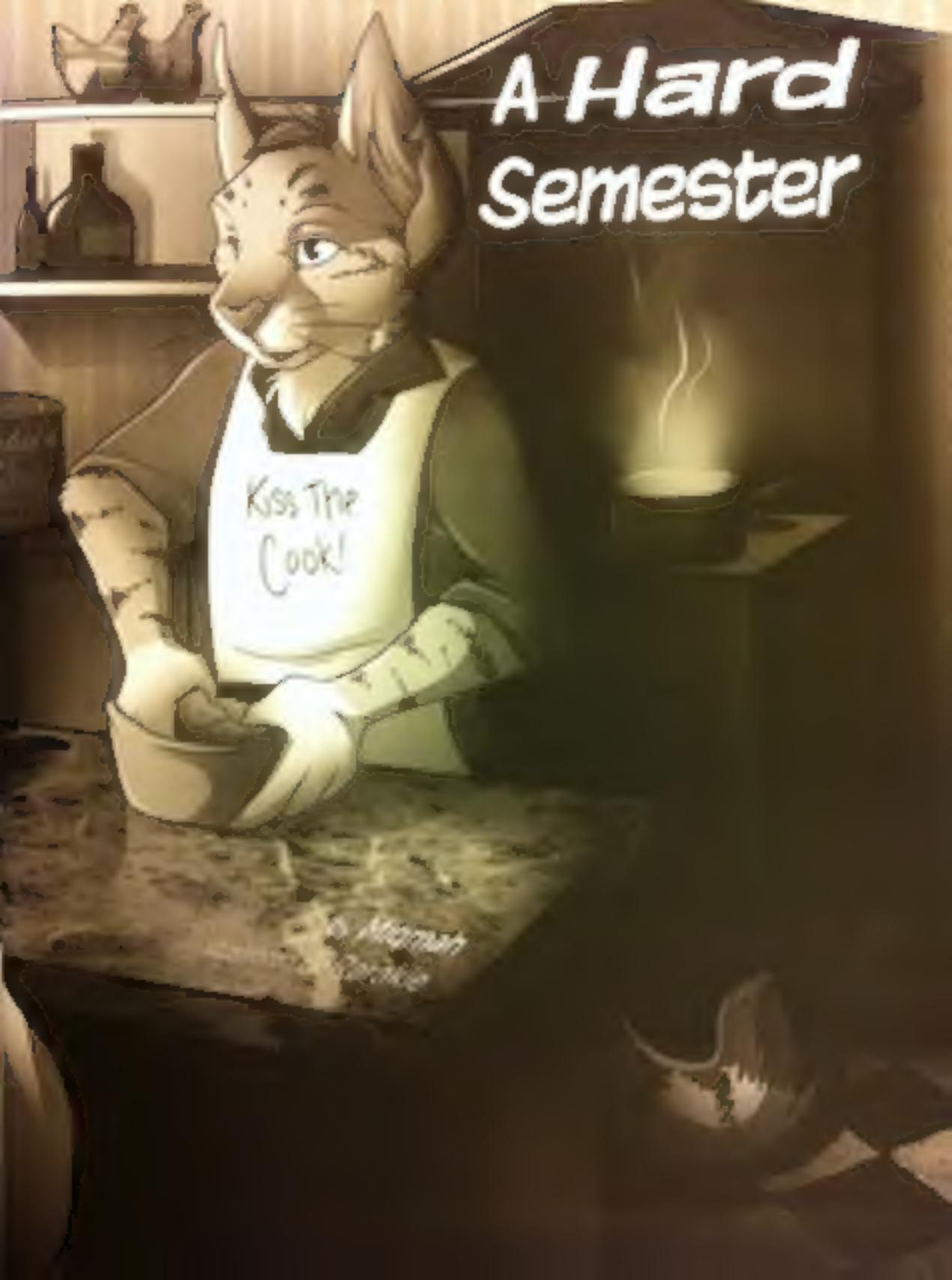
GOOD LUCK, SON.

Dad! I did the
roommate matcher.

Have some faith that
they put me with
someone good.

YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN
SUCH AN OPTIMIST.

I'LL MISS YOU WHEN HE BEATS
YOU TO A PULP FOR TOUCHING HIS



A Hard Semester

Kiss The
Cook!

Cecil, you got a letter from your school!" the scruffy looking tabby cat yelled in the direction of the stairs as he sorted through a stack of mail.

A few seconds later, a younger cat with all white fur, with the exception of a tan spot over his left eye, walked calmly down the stairs and over to the kitchen counter where the letter was sitting.

"Must be my room assignment," he said, picking it up and tearing it open with a claw. He pulled out a yellow piece of paper and started skimming through it. "7th floor... commonal bathroom... one roommate: Preston Appleton." He put the letter down.

"Well," Cecil's father scoffed. "That's a future mate. Does it give you contact info?"

Cecil picked up the letter and flipped it over. "None."

"Jerk. Probably some snobby snob up there that thinks he's better than you. Why wouldn't someone give out contact info? You're going to be staying with the guy for a year, for god's sake!"

"(sigh)"

"Sorry, sleeping over to him. Whatever, you'll still be at the same room as him for a long time, he might as least give you a phone number so you can find out something about him first. If he's fine, he can stay the whole year."

"Well, I have a name. Maybe he's on FaceBook," Cecil said, walking through the family room to the computer and logging on. "Preston Appleton" he dictated as he typed. The results page popped up and he scrolled down a bit letting his eyes scan over the pictures. "Well, either I'm bunking with an 80 year old, or this is him."

Cecil stared at a picture of a muscular shirtless bartender in sunglasses catching a frisbee on a sunny beach.

"A bartender?" his dad commented. "Really? Do wonder he's got a name like that. I mean, worked with a Candice Fusteropian. Impudent son of a bitch I've ever met in a bar. Cecil's shoulders. "Good luck, son."

"Dad, I promise he's nice and laid back."

"Can you get any day off him?"

"They've got a private profile. Let me message him to see if he's the right guy."

"Hey, I think we might be roommates next year, are you going to Double River next year?" he typed and hit send.

"Alright, now to see if he responds," Cecil said clicking back to his empty profile page.

"He looks like a dick. You watch out for him."

"Dad! I did the roommate matcher. You some faith in the system that they put me into?"

"You've always been such an optimist... miss you when he beats you to a pulp for being his side of the sink."

"For your information, the rooms do have sinks; they're communal in the floor."

"Wash your hands after touching anything in there. And buy some waterproof shoes. I heard about some of those water-borne things you college kids catch."

"Stop reading weird internet articles you find," Cecil groaned before seeing the message pop up in his inbox. "Oh!" he responded.

"Dad," he read.

"Wow," his dad commented. "Useful."

Cecil just rolled his eyes and tried to ignore him. A few seconds later, the final step was confirmed and he pulled Preston up in the chat.

"Hey."

"No."

"So, you're Preston?"

"Call me Tim. Pronounced like them."

"Alright. So, tell me about yourself."

"Well, I don't have much of a personality because of all the steroids I take, but the ability to touch my junk which is small and painful and I wake up for my lack of intelligence and the 50 pounds of muscle I carry around. You could call me a prick, but most people just look and fuck around."

Cecil just stared wide-eyed at the screen and his dad burst out laughing.

"Tim... wait... at least you're honest."

"Yeah, wanna see a picture of my junk? It's like a cocktail sweater, only smaller and less appealing."

"... No thanks."

"Haha... just by the way, I'm sexually attracted to sponges and certain substances made of cotton. Oh, and I stopped using deodorant and toothpaste when I found out the Mormon girls are coming. Hope you don't mind."

"Is this really Tom?"

"Of course, dumbers. Who else would it be? Who else can be this stupid and sexy at the same time. My biceps could feed a third world country's' drift gaffit sur sudif booperlif, mTRKNSIDES."

"Sorry about that. My little sister likes to go onto my account when I leave the house."

"Ahh. Well, that's a relief."

"Ahhh, shit. She typed some weird crap. Everything but the thing about sponges is a lie."

"Um..."

"HA! Just kidding. I'm actually a pretty nice guy, or at least that's what people tell me. I work out, so I'll probably be in the gym more than our room, but I look forward to getting to know you."

"That's cool. What sport do you play?"

"Nothing in particular. I just like activity. Hates about you?"

"Um, I'm a professional Olympic coach sitter."

"Ha! Well, we can change that."

"No thanks. I like my busy quality."

"You seem like a good guy. But I have to go do some stuff soon. Any quick questions?"

"Oh, nothing I can think of now."

"Cool. Oh, and my parents are buying us a fridge and microwave, that cost with you?"

"Mother, animals ground?"

"Sweet, catch ya later!"

"Well," Cecil's dad said as Tom logged off. "That was weird."

"Yeah, a little. It'll be an interesting year."

"Told you he's rich."

"Oh, shut up."

"Did you get everything?"

"Yes."

"Did you double check?"

"Yes."

"Triple check?"

"Sure."

"Quattro..."

"DAD! Let's just go. The school's an hour and a half away and I'll come back in two weeks for the weekend. I want to check out my new place!"

"Alright then, cheeeeze!"

The doors slammed shut and the ancient chunker scuttled out of the driveway and turned hard, sending everything to one end of the car in a noisy crash.

"Whoops," Cecil's dad said, laughing. "No time to fix it now, on we go!"

Cecil sighed and put in his ear buds and watched the trees zoom past from the passenger side window. He tried to find a comfortable position in the cramped little car with the laundry basket of clothing jammed between his legs. It was a long ride and he had just enough battery life to survive it.

As the first sign for the school passed, Cecil's dad whacked the strapping cat in the side of the arm, squirming him and making all of his fur fluff out.

"Cat! Now I'm going to look like a freak on my first day!" Cecil said, passing down as much of his fur as he could reach. "What if there's a cute girl across the hall? First impressions are important!"

"Babbi, you're a lady killer like your ol' dad here. You'll have to buy a rake just to keep them back, trust me."

Cecil looked over to the pudgy, shaggy cat in a sweater vest and shorts with mismatched socks perching above his dirt caked tennis shoes.

"Uh god," he said under his breath. "I'm going to die a virgin."

"That's not a bad thing. You won't have to worry about accidental litters! By the way, I bought a 50 pack of condoms. They're in with your underwear. Use them."

"Dad... eww."

"Whattt You're my only child, and I want to make sure you're safe. Wear them on your feet in the shower. I found a new article about some magenta-cockatiel virus that breeds in the grout of bathroom tiles."

"Did you peef? Because I'm not stopping." the scraggly tabby asked as he closed the over-packed trunk.

"Yes, dad. But even if I didn't your bladder makes sure we stop at least three times along the way anyway."

"Not this time. I haven't drunken anything in the last 24 hours."

"Uh, dad, that's not healthy."

"Nope, but its worth it not having to get on those damn highway exists and drive around those weird mid-towns around them. Who the hell lives in those anyways?"

"Whatever dad, let's go."

"I told you to stop reading those, they're all bullsh—"

"Crap," strolled the road," his dad said craning his neck back and swerving slightly into oncoming traffic. Cecil petted and he swerved back violently, nearly missing a truck and sending what sounded like a box of paperclips clattering down before the car came. "That would have been messy," he chuckled as Cecil passed his fur down again.

"Just follow these people," Cecil said pointing to a black station wagon in front of them with a blaster flashing. "They look like they know where they're going."

"I don't know...they have a Marilyn Manson bumper sticker. They might shoot at us if we follow them."

"Dad, stop talking."

They drove until they saw the sign for Cecil's home. After driving in circles around the hill parking for 15 minutes,

Cecil's dad rolled his eyes and drove over to park and onto the grass.

"Dad?"

"What? Like they're going to give me time in this mess?"

"Whatever. I'm going to go check in, so don't you go back and make sure nothing breaks."

"Sounds like a plan!"

When Cecil returned, his dad had all the stuff in piles outside of the car.

"I live in a shoebox," the younger man said pocketing a set of house keys.

"Sounds lovely. Are there windows?"

"Kinda."

"Glad we're paying thousands for it."

"Son isn't here yet, so we'll have to bring up supplies our own. They told me the cleaners aren't working."

"Well. Let's get going. Here's your underwear."

His dad handed him a box that had his underwear in a heap hanging off the sides.

"They were folded..." Cecil said, looking down at the jumbled pile.

"Had to check on the contours. They're just fine."

Cecil sighed and tried to stuff as much of his undermentionables into the box as he could, but gave up and just heaved another box up with it to the stairs to his left.

As they reached his room, he placed the boxes down and put his keys. A tall blonde woman walked up, made eye contact with Cecil and smiled. As he smiled back, she looked down at the untidy box, giggled and walked past him into the door across the hall.

Cecil glared at his dad.

"I'll buy you that cake to keep them away," he said as Cecil groaned and opened the door. "What a beautiful closer, now where's the rest of the

2003-2004

"Show up dad! I'm cleaning that bird, or just dump the bones there."

Once the last box had been stacked against the wall next to the bed Cecil had indicated.

he hugged his dad and said his goodbyes. Soon, the cat found himself sitting alone on a striped mattress covered in questionable stains in the middle of an empty, quiet room.

"So, this is college life..." he said to himself.

Cecil decided to check the place out, and gave himself a walking tour of the hallway, then the building, then the campus. After he exhausted all he could think of to do, he went back to his room to discover it was a half hour later.

He collapsed on the bed, making sure to avoid the strangely colored blotsches, and stared at the ceiling. Idly wondering when his roommate would arrive, he bounced his feet off a cardboard box for a while, then sat back up.

Cecil dug out his posters and started putting them up on the wall. Then he put all his clothes away and hid the enormous box of cushions. He set up his desk and organized his pencils from his pens, then looked over his class schedule, comparing it with a campus map, before reorganizing his pencils once again.

As he leaned against his soft chair and looked around at the half occupied room, he smiled.

"I can live here. I guess."

There was a loud thud against the door and a muffled curse. Cecil sat up and looked at the door as he heard the cattle of boys.

The door swung open and a large boy pushed through, then crashed to the floor, revealing a Rottweiler standing behind.

"Fuck, that's heavy!" the Rottweiler growled before noticing Cecil. "Hey! You must be Cecil! The RA that checked me in said you were here, but you must have been out. I'm too."

Cecil stood up and shook his hand. "Nice to meet you, finally."

"Hey, Cecil, want to help me bring the rest of my stuff up? My family had to dash, so I'm kinda on my own otherwise."

"Yeah, sure."

The two walked out to the parking lot and Tom walked up to an old bright pink car.

"Nice...color," Cecil said, trying not to sound rude.

"Hah! It's my sister's Honda...smashed mine, so I got hers, and my parents are being close on giving me money to re-paint it...as punishment. Don't get any ideas."

"None what-so-ever."

"So, I don't have much, but what I have is heavy. That's probably the lightest box there. You can have that one."

Cecil picked up a smaller box and gasped at how heavy it was. He hiked it up and tried to get a good grip on the corners as Tom grunted and picked up a larger box. Tom slammed the car door shut with his jump and started walking towards the building.

"Oh, the elevators aren't working," Cecil said as Tom started for the doors.

"Ha, you fell for that? It's a joke they play on freshmen."

Cecil sighed as he saw someone leave through the sliding metal doors. "Aren't you a freshman?"

"Yeah, but I had a brother who went here a few years ago. Not much changes."

As the dorm room door swung open, Cecil ran to Tom's bed and dropped the package onto it, desperate for relief. He rubbed his aching arms.

"You're pretty strong for a little guy," Tom said, knocking his box to the ground. "And you've got a new set of legs on you."

Cecil passed and gave him a strange look.

"What? I'm an athlete. I notice these kinds of things."

Cecil just shook his head and forgot about it.

"Want to get some food?"

Q&A

"So, what time do you normally go to bed and wake up?" Tom asked as he got ready for bed.

"Like...two in the morning and noon?"

"Wow. Well, we can compromise. How about midnight and ten, sound good?"

"Sure."

Tom peeled off his shirt and hung it into a corner of the room. He stretched and noticed Cecil staring at him.

"Lookin's free, but touchin's gonna cost ya," Tom said jokingly, flexing his muscles.

"Oh, sorry. I didn't mean to stare. You're just so..."

"Ripped? It's a family thing. I'm the least fit, if you can believe it."

"I don't."

"To show you a picture of my sister some time."

"I think I'm good."

"Not too bad. I like you."

"Well, that's good."

Ton started to pull down his pants.

"What?" Cecil said as Ton stopped half way.

"What are you doing?"

"Uh... um... well, I kinda normally sleep in the nude. So, I figured that staying in my underwear wouldn't be that bad. Is that going to be a problem?"

"Well... I guess not. I mean, if you're under sheets, it really doesn't matter."

"Great, thanks man. If you've got anything that'll make you more comfortable, go ahead and do it. I'm pretty flexible," he said, letting his shorts drop to the floor.

He was wearing a pair of tight yellow briefs, which did a little more than just outline his rather large package. Cecil caught himself smiling as Ton turned around towards the closet. His ass was perfectly round under the taught fabric, and his muffin top sat nestled perfectly at the top of them.

Cecil felt himself get a little hard under his sheets and quickly looked away while attempting to hide the embarrassing new development. He claimed in his mind to be mostly straight, but the few times he looked up gay or guy stuff, he did the same thing for him, though he never told anyone.

As Ton turned back around he was scratching his back, shifting everything inside the tight fabric, and Cecil had to fight not to peek out of the corner of his eye.

"Well, see you in the morning!" Ton said, slipping into his sheets and pushing his pillow a few times. He rolled over and clicked off the light.

Cecil laid awake in the dark with his pants on the stand and holding under his pajama pants.

"Alright, Cecil, he said in his head. So, he's not *that* bad. You prepared a dinner. No big deal. You'll get used to seeing him and it won't be a problem. Just hide it now and never look at him again. Fuck."

"Hey, Cecil!" Ton asked, turning toward him in the dark.

"Yeah?" he answered holding down his erection as close to his hip as he could manage.

"I know that it's our first night and you've already been generous with my comfort thing..."

"Yeah," he grunted.

"Should I do you think I could sleep in the nude? I'm trying, but I'm just not used to the

clothing thing and you did say that since we didn't have a sheet, it doesn't really matter."

"Go ahead," Cecil said quickly, his cock pulsing through his pants.

"Aww, man, you're the best! I owe you a huge favor."

"Don't worry about it."

Ton shifted and pulled off the sheets and flung them into the corner of the room, sighing in relief as he found a comfortable position.

Cecil gulped as he felt the wet spot against his pants.

Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck.

SCENE

The next morning, Cecil woke up with his cock shoved hard into the mattress and he remembered where he was. He opened his eyes and saw a nude Ton standing in front of his closet. The dim light from the window lit up his muscular back and that round ass as he dug around in a pile of underwear and slipped into a pair of orange briefs.

As Ton turned around, Cecil slammed his eye shut and tried to fight the moan from the pulsing wood beneath him. As he heard Ton walk away and the door close, he rolled over and freed his cock.

"Fuck. This is going to be a hard semester," he said to himself as his paw plunged into his pants.

Cecil moaned as his cock finally got the attention it craved all night. He slipped his pants down and let his cock bob in front of him before wrapping his paw around and feverishly pumping away on his bed, thinking about the ass and that package and how close he was to both of them, but so far away at the same time.

He felt a pressure building inside of him as he moaned and felt his cock jump in his pants. A rope of cum shot from his tip and his orgasm shook in his mind as he heard a key slip inside the lock. His heart panged as he let go mid-spurt and pulled the sheets up over himself just as Ton's head poked in.

"Oh..." Ton said as he noticed what was happening. "I... uh... I... oh... I'm... just... gonna... go..." He closed the door quickly behind him.

"Fuck," Cecil said under his breath, pushing back the sticky sheets. "Damn it."

After dumping his sheets into a laundry machine, Cecil went back to his room and sat down at his desk, sighing.

He heard a loud knocking and a few seconds later the familiar sound of a key in the lock. The door slowly opened and Tom walked in, avoiding eye contact.

"Uh, about what just happened," Tom said, placing a towel on the back of his chair. "I understand, but I think we need to set up some kind of system or something."

"Look, I don't normally do it. I just...had a...gum dream, you know."

"You don't normally do it? What does that mean?" Tom asked, reluctantly looking at Cecil with a confused look.

"Um, well, I don't do it very often."

"Like, what... three times a week?" Tom's interest was very apparent.

"Well, more like maybe once every two weeks? Maybe less?" Cecil said a little uncomfortably.

"Holy shit, you eat the crabs! I have to do it like every day or I lose it."

Cecil cleared his throat to show his feelings towards the conversation.

"OK," Tom said nervously. "Look, the only thing that made that awkward is that we're still kinda strangers. I want us to be buds and feel free to do whatever is here."

Cecil fidgeted, a little unsure of where Tom was going.

"So, why don't we just tear down this stupid wall of awkwardness, and I'll show you mine if you show me yours and we agree to let each other do whatever, whenever the mood strikes us? I think it could work. Plus, I kinda need to do the daily chores, if you know what I mean."

"You...you want to jerk off in front of me?" Cecil asked, wondering if this conversation was for real. His jeans were just barely concealing the erection pressing hard against the fabric; he was glad he wore long shorts.

"Well, yeah. I'm not going to make you watch or anything, but, we agree that males have certain habits, and that it's perfectly natural, so why hide it and make it awkward?"

"I...guess?"

"Are you sure? I don't want to force you into anything."

"No, it's cool. Just, can give me a little warning beforehand?"

"Aww, awesome. You really are a cool guy, Cecil. Now, I think I'm going to test out the new agreement, if you don't mind."

Cecil just kind of stared and slowly nodded before turning around at his desk. He heard Tom unzip his pants and let loose a little moan.

"Oh god, Cecil thought to himself. What does Tom give himself? Tom's never going to be soft again. Good going.

Cecil turned his head a little and looked out of the corner of his eye. The Rottweiler's pants were sliding up and down a thick black cock already stone with sex. He was flexed on some silent path on his lapels and his tongue was hanging out of his mouth ever so slightly as he panted.

Cecil's cock poised in the pant leg of his jeans and he turned back around.

Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck. You're the luckiest idiot on the planet.

The cat's paw moved down between his legs along his hard shaft as he tried to keep it on. It felt so good, but when his cock panted again and he nearly came, he panicked.

Cecil stood up and excused himself very quickly and ran out of the room, trying to avoid looking at the monster cock in the rotter's lap.

As Cecil slid down the wall next to the door, the hot blonde came out in a short skirt and took top. She smiled and giggled at him as she walked down the hall. Cecil sighed and tried to get his mind off sex, or at least get the hand on out of his pants.

He sunk his head to his knees and thought about retirement homes, biscuit recipes, existential philosophy—anything that didn't have to do with sex. When the hour finally died down, he heard his door open and Tom step into the hall.

"I'm sorry if that was weird for you," Tom said, fiddling with the keys in his pocket. "We...we'll work it out later."

Cecil didn't look up but just nodded and heard Tom walk away. He stood up and went back into the room.

The scent of spark lit him like a brick wall and he quickly ran to open the window. As the pheromone-fueled air emptied out of the tiny opening, Cecil laid down on his bed.

"This is going to be a very, very hard sentence."

“Ok so what’s happening?” Tom’s dad asked.
“I’m not sure.” I said. “I think it’s because we’re moving.”
“Moving? Moving where?”
“I don’t know.” I said. “I just know we’re moving.”
“We’re moving? To where?”
“I’m not sure.” I said. “I just know we’re moving.”
“Moving? Moving where?”
“I’m not sure.” I said. “I just know we’re moving.”

• Now that we have everything lined up, we can start the programming. First, we will set up the variables and then add the following code to the `onStart` function:

putting his money in stocks **so he can get**
longer hours for work.

Yeah dad I'm good. Thanks for bringing R up. See you this weekend.

Top the water. I could see past
below the dock. When I got back, Tom
was still shoring the big block with stones
from the beach. He had a long
daguerreotype camera in his pocket.
He took it out and showed me a picture
of the beach at high-tide.

Can't hit his tip. The guy's going to give me blue balls by the end of the week.

and decided what made the dispute. During his talk with the men he found that was being demanded that the men should stop at the wharf where ships were loading. He said to the Wharfmen, "That is all right. You have been doing the best you can for the men, but you have been doing it under the general idea that the men would never do it."

She would before getting in bed now and so applying oil to her cheeks and chin, then up it to her neck, then oiling down the chin again.

In 1970 we started our arboriculture and
trained up to 1000 field technicians across the country
producing over 100000.

The ~~the~~ ~~the~~ flight of the sunburner worked back and forth between his thighs as bright as he ate whole grain bread from the kitchen counter he'd just come from. He was taking the large marmalade jar up to the light fixture perched between two tall,

ment was by far the best, and the tension. As the last quarter was wrapped up in the final stretch, it was seen that the game would be decided in the last minute.

and the people were gathered together to see him. He went about teaching them.

...and the number of items taken from

the upper and lower land and water bounding line at the point where the river enters the lake.

The silent night was only broken with the occasional fury of crashing threets from his mouth as he watched as the embers died down. Instead of the crackling of burning wood, there were the sharp broken but unbroken sounds that were the language of the fire. The fire was much smaller than it had been.

Survey your audience! What have I promised to do with them? Do I have a plan? Do I have a goal?

we shall need help from other countries
and their help should be requested at the earliest
possible time. I am sure that the United States
will give help as far as possible. But this will take
time.

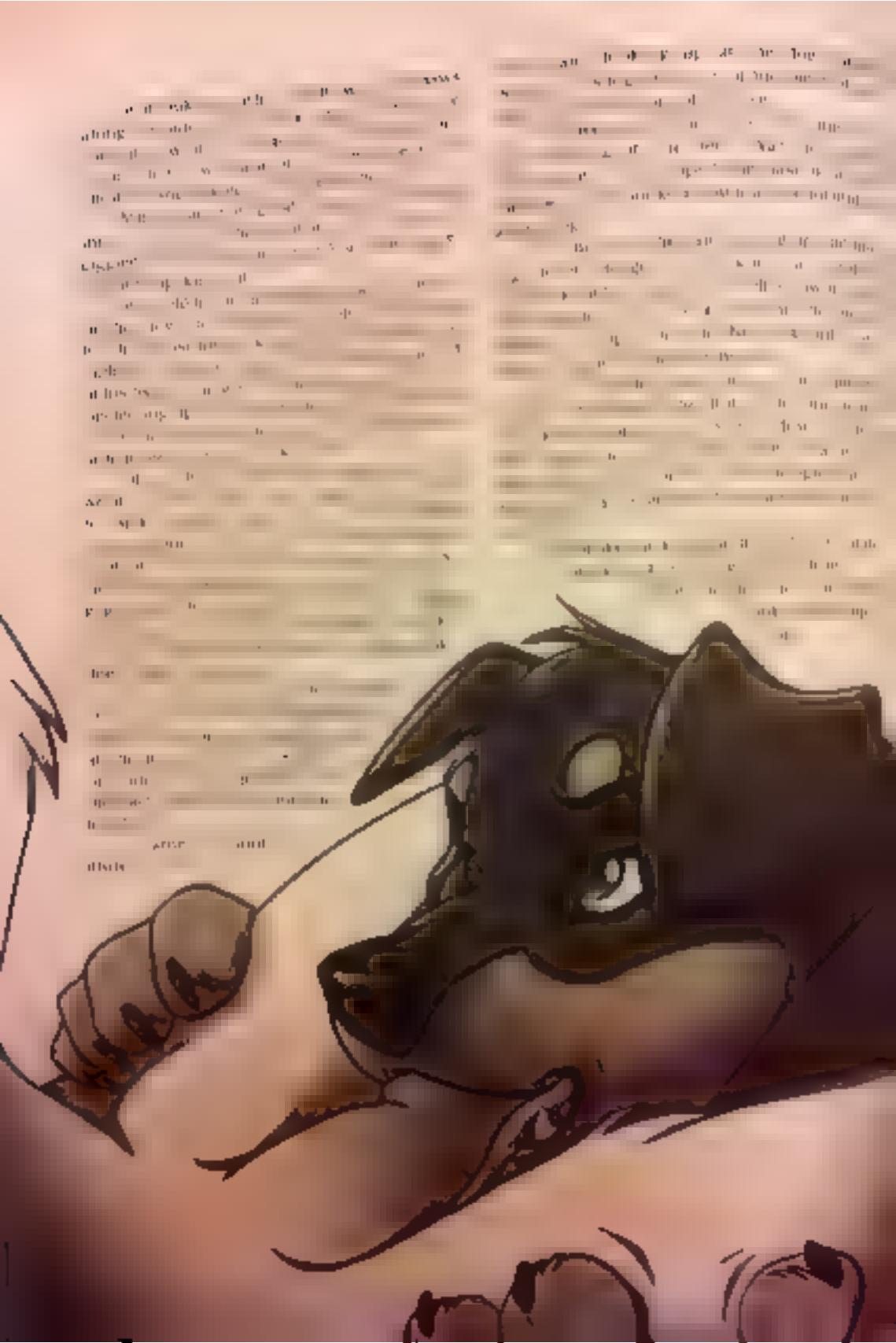
... was carried back and forth between
the two, and the men.

the year must suffer by intermission.

... new views - new in all respects
than last evening - new ideas - new ways of
thinking - new ways of doing things -

He's helping get dinner on the table so he can go to sleep. He can't feel his arm because his fingers are still numb from the cold.

The patient lies now away and watches all around him as Tom's shadow has been a little near to the side of the bed, making him nervous all the time. Breathing seems to him difficult at times.



Just do what you have to do, he would feel good.

He lowered himself down a step, his grandfather's chest tickling him. He looked down, his length and gulped as he pressed his muzzle down to the base. The thick smell of mustang hit his nostrils as he made contact. He stuck his tongue out and moved up along the shoulder. He could feel his partner move up, he pressed his lips against his shaft and kissed his way back down until his nose was buried in thick fuzzy hair. He tapped at the shoulder, his head down, until his eyes met his grandfather's. "I'm sorry," he said, his voice cracking as he pulled away, his head down.

The dog's shaft opened his mouth
and he fell down. A man stood against his hips, and a man from Ton took him
up and put him on the ground, and he fell to

Wavelength	Intensity	Wavelength	Intensity	Wavelength	
400 nm	Weak	450 nm	Strong	500 nm	Very Strong
550 nm	Strong	600 nm	Very Strong	650 nm	Strong
700 nm	Very Strong	750 nm	Strong	800 nm	Very Strong
850 nm	Strong	900 nm	Very Strong	950 nm	Strong

Humanistic approaches have also been

4. *On the basis of the above information, the shopkeeper may reduce the strength of his pack of 2000 rupees by 10%.*

With the right hand held as he had been told, he intoned a short prayer and recited the names of his three wife, his four children and the back of his head.

The legend surrounding him has always been small lies, no writing, and painting, hand-painted murals. He sang the old blues, his voice guttural, with head lowered. Then, with bare hands,

Some of those 100 with the original band
are still here, and I expect all the same
as before will return to the banks of the River. The
object of his separation might be to allow each
of the two young gulls to test the waters of the
parallel stream. He is a bit plumpish and there is a que-
stion here about the field around the nest which he has
occupied a few months ago, starting with a few small
mud hills finally almost

referred to the naming Bestseller with
a 2003 update of what's new.
April 2003 edition OR Updated as the
Case

Cecil pinched and spun the white lead out onto the bed. He looked back up.

"Nah, you're just new. You did just fine. I
you screwed up, you wouldn't have had any
chance to speak not at all!" Tom laughed, pat-
ting his head and handing him a bit of sheet to
clean up with.

"Now," Tom said, looking at the clock on his desk, "I do need to wash up early tomorrow so

"Yeah, I'm a little tired anyway," Cecil said, signing off his e-mail.

The two lay down on their conjoined beds under the clean blanket. Cecil looked up at the glowing star on the ceiling and smiled before doffing off to sleep next to Togi's warm body.

Geoff's eyes shot open as he heard an electronic chime and found himself again next to his love. He turned off the bedside alarm clock and lay back down.

"Morning. You never called last night, so I'm writing at 5 and 1/2 hours this morning. And you have me now, to keep."

...and here's my pulse print
done by the old system.

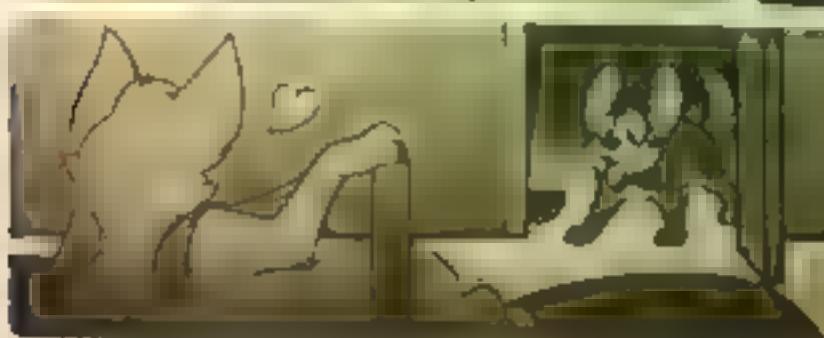
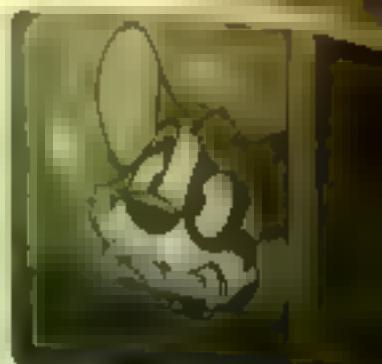
It is the nature and extent of dependence
of one individual upon another that is the
basis upon which the classification of
persons as public and private is based upon the
degree of control by the other individual.

HEAT

CONDOM

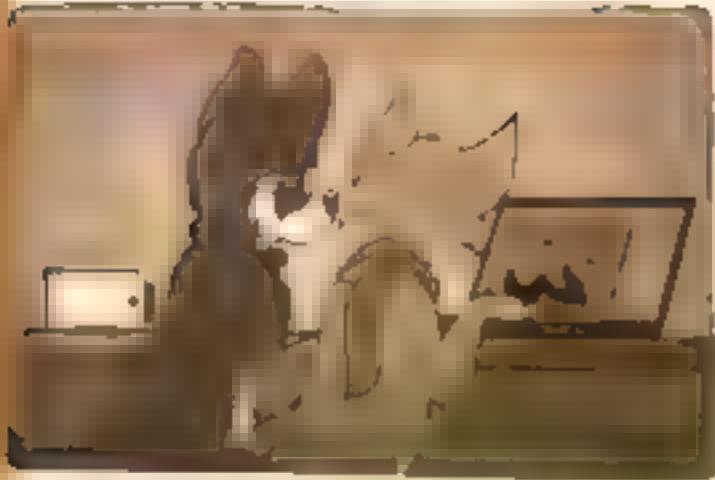
*Contain everything
but your passion*











45A

Original

Interpretation

Bus Stop

A cold wind ruffled the fur on my face as I stepped out the door. Tiny, icy droplets blew under the awning over the courthouse steps and settled on my glasses. I sighed; it was an apropos end to such a grisly day. I looked down at the large envelope full of papers that I clutched tightly in my rusty paws, a packet full of cars and homes and retirement plans, all neatly halved. It was finally done, and I was free, but somehow I didn't feel relieved. Everyone else would say that I should be happy, but profound guilt was the only emotion I could muster at that moment.

A tabby in a smart suit brushed past me on his way out the door heralded by a breeze laden with his spicy cologne. He gave me the thumbs up. "Great work, Angie! We couldn't have asked for better."

"I'm just glad it's over, Cal," I breathed as he continued out into the rain and unfurled an expensive umbrella. I found my counsel's sunny disposition irritatingly inappropriate. I also resented that he wouldn't call me anything other than "Angie"; only my parents called me that.

"Call me if you need anything else," he threw over his shoulder.

I secretly prayed that I wouldn't. I was quite through with lawyers and courts and arguments and everything else. I just wanted to get on with my life. I pulled back the neatly pressed sleeve of my jacket and checked the time: 3:30. Opening my own umbrella, I set forth into the uncaring rain and plodded through the indifferent puddles toward the bus stop and my ride home.

I approached the lonesome post that marked the stop for the 45A and waited patiently for the bus to arrive. The minutes passed, and I started to rock back and forth on my heels, wishing the bus would hurry up. The rain whipped miserably around my umbrella and soaked my fur, and the cold crept up my toes and numbed my feet.

While I was grumbling to myself about the weather, my vulpine ears pricked at the sound of someone approaching from my left, and a second later instinct forced me to glance that direction. A young feline had come to wait for the bus as well, and the poor girl was soaked from head to toe. Her jeans were dark and heavy with water, and her worn tee shirt clung tightly to her body, flattering her curves. Her auburn hair fell in streaks around her face, just barely held together by a drenched bandana. Even the spots on her fur looked ready to run like ink off dampened paper. She clutched a shopping bag to her chest and attempted to protect whatever was inside from the weather.

I minded my own business as best I could, but I couldn't help pitying her. I felt supremely foolish since she was a total stranger, but in spite of myself I took two steps to my left and shielded her from the storm with my umbrella. She flashed me a fanged grin and stood a little closer in a way that made me uneasy, so I shifted a half-step away to give her more room.

Her voice was sunny and cheerful, a stark contrast with her soggy appearance. "Thanks!"

I returned her smile uneasily, my voice shaking a little. "What are you doing out here without an umbrella or a coat?"

"I didn't know it was gonna rain."

"They've forecasted it all week," I insisted. I wasn't sure why it mattered to me.

She shrugged and laughed a little. "Can't say I keep up with that stuff."

I was taken aback. What kind of person didn't keep up with basic things like the news and weather forecasts? She was a strange girl, indeed. "Well, I hope your things weren't ruined."

She glanced momentarily at the drenched package against her bosom. "Yeah, me too. These colors aren't cheap."

One of my ears twitched while I thought, scattering raindrops across my shoulder. "Uh... colors?"

She smiled at me again, gnawing further at what little comfort I had left with the situation. "Yeah, I'm an art student. I'm working on my master's degree over at the university."

"Ah, I see."

She thrust a sopping wet paw in my direction. "You can call me Emily, by the way."

I shook the offered hand gingerly with my own, careful not to get any wetter than I already was. "I'm Angela."

We completed our introductions just as the 45A slid up to the curb with a squeal of brakes and a rolling splash of puddle-water. Emily and I sloshed our way up to the big, white bus, eagerly seeking shelter. Once we were on board, I noticed that only one last pair of seats remained available, right next to each other.

My ears drooped a little. I had hoped to put some distance between us, but as my questionable luck would have it, the young ocelot would be sitting right next to me. I quietly took the seat by the window, resigned to my fate. Sure enough, Emily plopped down in the adjacent space with a squishy squelch. I tucked myself a little tighter against the side of the bus as she dripped on my clean, pressed skirt.

She continued our conversation without missing a beat. "Anyways, I just headed out to get some supplies, but I didn't think it would rain like this." Her calm demeanor shifted suddenly. "Oh my gosh! I forgot to thank you for sharing your umbrella."

"No, you didn't," I reminded her. "But you're welcome."

Warmth emanated from her, emphasizing how close we were sitting together, so I pushed myself up against the cool window pane. She continued talking, completely oblivious of my movements.

"I'm headed back to the dorms now. Where are you going?"

"Home."

"Oh. Short day at work?"

I shook my head dismissively and stared out the window. "I wasn't at work. I was at the courthouse."

The reflection of her nose in the window scrunched up. "Something serious?"

"I was finalizing my divorce, if you really want to know."

She looked genuinely concerned. "I'm sorry," she said quietly. "You wanna talk about it?"

Her sincerity caught me by surprise, and I nervously swept a sandy curl from my eyes that had fallen from its place. "Uh, not really. Thank you, though."

Silence fell over us for a few minutes, and eventually the bus halted at the university stop. Emily gathered up her things. "Well, this is my stop. I hope I see you again," she said casually as she slid out into the aisle.

As she started to walk away, a word leapt impetuously to my lips. "23B."

She turned and looked at me over her shoulder. "Pardon?"

I forced a smile, suddenly very self-conscious about how silly I was acting. "That's... uh, that's my usual bus. From Fifth Street."

Her face widened into a toothy grin, and she disappeared off the bus.

I found it difficult to wipe the smile off my face. I didn't really understand why I was grinning, but I couldn't help it. Still, it made me anxious; I wasn't raised to behave like that. I relaxed and dropped my paw to the seat next to me, then cursed softly and shook the water off from Emily's puddle.



The next morning it was all business as usual. I waited patiently for the bus at my usual stop and read my usual morning paper, mulling over the usual financial reports. I hadn't given another thought to Emily since the day before, and I decided that I would most likely never see her again. With a little luck, my life would return to normal, and I could put the day before safely in the past.

"Good morning!"

I peeled my gaze off the newspaper; the young ocelot stood to my left, greeting me with her cheery smile and sparkling, chocolate eyes. At least this time she was dry. Once again, she clutched an armful of recent purchases to her chest.

I was a little surprised and off guard, but after a few heartbeats I managed to sputter something. "Ah, uh... good morning. What brings you out this way?"

She shrugged. "Just had to pick up some groceries."

I was skeptical. I knew for a fact that there were grocery stores closer to the university than my neighborhood. Before I could decide on an appropriate retort, however, the bus trundled up to the stop. The doors hissed open, and my familiar bus driver, a middle-aged tiger in a smart blue uniform, took a moment to give me a wink and a smile as I boarded. I gave him my usual fake smile in return and followed Emily to the first available seat.

Emily grinned at me as I settled down on the bench next to her. "He was *totally* flirting with you," she said unnecessarily.

"Not interested," I replied in a very final tone of voice. I returned to reading my paper.

Mercifully she dropped the subject and decided to peek over my shoulder instead. "What're you reading?"

"Just catching up on the stock market," I responded, and Emily immediately wrinkled her cute little pink nose. I tried to ignore her adorable response as I set my paper down on my lap. "So what do you read, then?"

"I like the funnies."

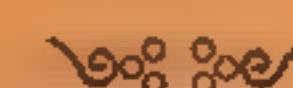
I should have known. "Of course," I said and rolled my eyes. I picked up my paper and continued reading.

Even though Emily was sitting perfectly still with her paws folded in her lap, I found it difficult to concentrate on the stories in the paper. Finally, with a sigh, I thumbed through the paper until I found the comics section and handed it to her. Unsurprisingly, she gave me another one of her toothy grins, and I smiled in a way that probably looked more like a grimace. With Emily's face buried in the comics, it was a little easier for me to continue our ride in silence.

Our bus ground to a halt, and as quickly as our morning ride had started, it was over. Emily rose from her seat and brushed past me, her tail waving back and forth right under my nose. My ears folded back in a fierce blush, and I tried my best to keep my attention on some article about derivatives.

She shot one last smile in my direction before departing. "Have a good day!"

I muttered an affirmative and hunkered down in my seat, hiding my sheepish face behind my newspaper.



I didn't see Emily again until the next day when I was riding the bus home from work. She got on at the midway point and plopped down next to me, and for once she seemed less than chipper. Part of me was still telling me not to get involved, but I couldn't help feeling concerned for her.

I almost reached out and touched her, but I stopped myself at the last second. "Are you okay?"

She gave me a faint smile and showed off her bandaged arm. "I gave blood. I'll be alright."

"Oh. Well that was nice of you."

"Do you ever donate blood?"

I felt a little ashamed. "Um, no. I... I don't deal well with needles. Or blood, for that matter."

Emily was unfazed, and her smile gained strength. "That's cool. I'm glad it doesn't bother me at all."

"I take it you give blood often?"

"As often as I can!" she beamed. "I love helping people. I also volunteer at the local women's shelter."

I grumbled something unflattering about overachievers, but thankfully the squealing brakes on the bus drowned it out. I looked through the window and focused on the bored people waiting at the stop.

Without warning, Emily became her usual animated self. She leapt up and grabbed my paw, dragging me towards the front of the bus. "Let's get off here!"

"Wait, this isn't my stop!"

I protested for a few more steps, but she didn't listen. We disembarked, and the bus drove away. Part of me wanted to shake loose of the young woman's grip, but another part foolishly pushed me to wrap my paw tighter around hers. Emily smiled at me when I did so, and I blushed again.

I was curious but also slightly irritated. "Why did we get off here?"

"So we can have a cup of coffee," she replied as-a-matter-of-factly and pulled me towards a nearby café.

"You could've just asked..."

I bought coffee for us from a bright-faced barista, plain espresso for myself and some sort of flavored cappuccino for Emily. We sat together at a little table in the front where we could watch the people and the cars go by, and she regaled me with tales about life at the college, her stupid ex-boyfriend, and other such superficial things. To be honest, I wasn't listening as much as I should have; I kept getting distracted by the way her lips moved when she talked and how she kept tucking uncooperative strands of her gorgeous auburn locks back into her bright green bandana.

She stopped talking abruptly, and my ears perked in response. Worry seeped into the edges of my voice. "What's wrong?"

Emily shook her head. "Nothing, you were just looking at me kinda funny. Are you okay?"

It occurred to me that I was probably ogling her like an infatuated schoolgirl, and I turned my attention toward the street to avoid her gaze. While I was trying to think of an excuse, something tickled the back of my mind. I remembered that I had an appointment, which

gave me the perfect opportunity to change the subject.

"I'm sorry, Emily, but I need to get home. My ex-husband is coming by to pick up some of his things."

"Oh! Would you like me to come along for moral support?"

The thought hadn't even crossed my mind that she would actually want to come with me. It probably wasn't the best idea, but I also had to admit that I didn't like the idea of facing Scott on my own.

My voice finally squeaked out as a hopeful but unconfident whisper. "Sure. I would like that."

We walked back to the stop and took the next bus back to my condo. Emily held my hand the entire way, ostensibly for support, but I enjoyed it for the pure experience of touching her. By the time we arrived at my home, I was smiling, which was not something I did very often in those days.

I brought her up to my downtown loft, and I could tell right away that she'd never seen anything like it. She took a walk around the living room, carefully avoiding my leather furniture as she padded lightly across the hardwood floors and oriental rugs. She looked a bit overwhelmed.

"Wow," she finally said. "Nice digs."

"Thanks. Can I get you something to drink or anything?"

She shook her head negatively. Just at that moment, a firm rap sounded at the door. My heart skipped a beat, but I regained my composure and answered it.

"Scott," I greeted the sour-looking fox at the door. His shirt and slacks were wrinkled; his appearance was definitely sloppier since we split up. "Come in," I continued. "I'll get those things you left."

He grunted an answer and stepped into the living room. Immediately his eyes zeroed in on Emily, and at that moment I regretted inviting her. "Am I interrupting something?" he asked icily. It came out more like an accusation than a question.

"Uh, no," I stammered, feeling a little more guilty than was probably warranted.

Emily stepped forward and extended her paw towards my ex-husband with her typical exuberance. "Hi! I'm Emily."

Scott picked up on my guilt and misinterpreted the situation. "You slut," he spat at

me, completely ignoring the young woman. "You just couldn't wait to pick up some chick, could you?"

My ears fell back against my head, and my tail tucked. Inescapable shame gripped me. "Scott, it's not like that—"

He cut me off. "Like hell it is! She looks half your age, too. You're sick!"

Tears came to my eyes and any further words fled my mouth, but Emily jumped to my defense. "Hey, you can't talk to her like that!"

"*Mind your own fuckin' business,*" Scott growled at her.

She growled right back at him, a surprisingly fierce snarl for someone her size, and my ex-husband actually backed down, unnerved by her display. I took advantage of the pause in the conversation, grabbed the box of Scott's things, and shoved it into his arms, nearly pushing him out the door in the same motion.

"Please," I begged him. "Just take your things and go."

Thankfully, he stormed out of the apartment without another word. Softly I shut the door behind him, then leaned against the wall for support. The tears rolled freely down my muzzle.

Emily approached me and placed a comforting paw on my shoulder. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to cause trouble."

I turned to face her and tried my best to smile through my tears. "Don't worry about it. You didn't do anything."

She attempted a little levity. "Your ex is a real jerk, isn't he?"

I chuckled softly and wiped at my eyes with a paw. "He's just taking the divorce really hard."

"So the divorce was your idea, then. You're a lesbian, aren't you?"

Her candor struck me to the core, and my shame nearly drowned me. I briefly squeezed my eyes shut as more tears spilled forth. "Yes," I said, choking on the word. The very admission of it cut deep into my soul, tearing at the false foundations my life was built on. Emily waited patiently as I worked through it.

I gathered my strength and continued. "I can't really blame Scott for how angry he is. It took me ten years to figure out that I didn't love him the way he wanted to be loved. I didn't know until it was far too late."

I jumped a little as Emily touched my face; the heat of her paw pads surged past my fur, straight to my skin. She gingerly removed my

glasses and wiped a few of the tears away. "I feel so sorry for you. That must've been horrible."

I laughed a little, trying desperately to disguise how dreadful I felt. "I can only blame myself, really. I shouldn't have let my mother pressure me into getting married. She wanted grandchildren so badly."

Emily put a paw over her mouth. "Oh my gosh! You don't have children mixed up in this, do you?"

I shook my head. "No, and thank goodness for that. I was too afraid. I knew there was something wrong, something that told me I shouldn't. I'm glad now that I listened to that feeling."

There was a long pause, broken only by my sobbing sniffles and Emily's slow, even breaths. It took me a moment before I realized that Emily stood very, very close to me, our bodies almost touching. She reached up and caressed my cheek again, and I leaned into it, enjoying the feel of her paw on my face.

"You have very beautiful eyes," she said suddenly. "They remind me of emeralds. It's a shame you hide them behind these stodgy glasses all the time."

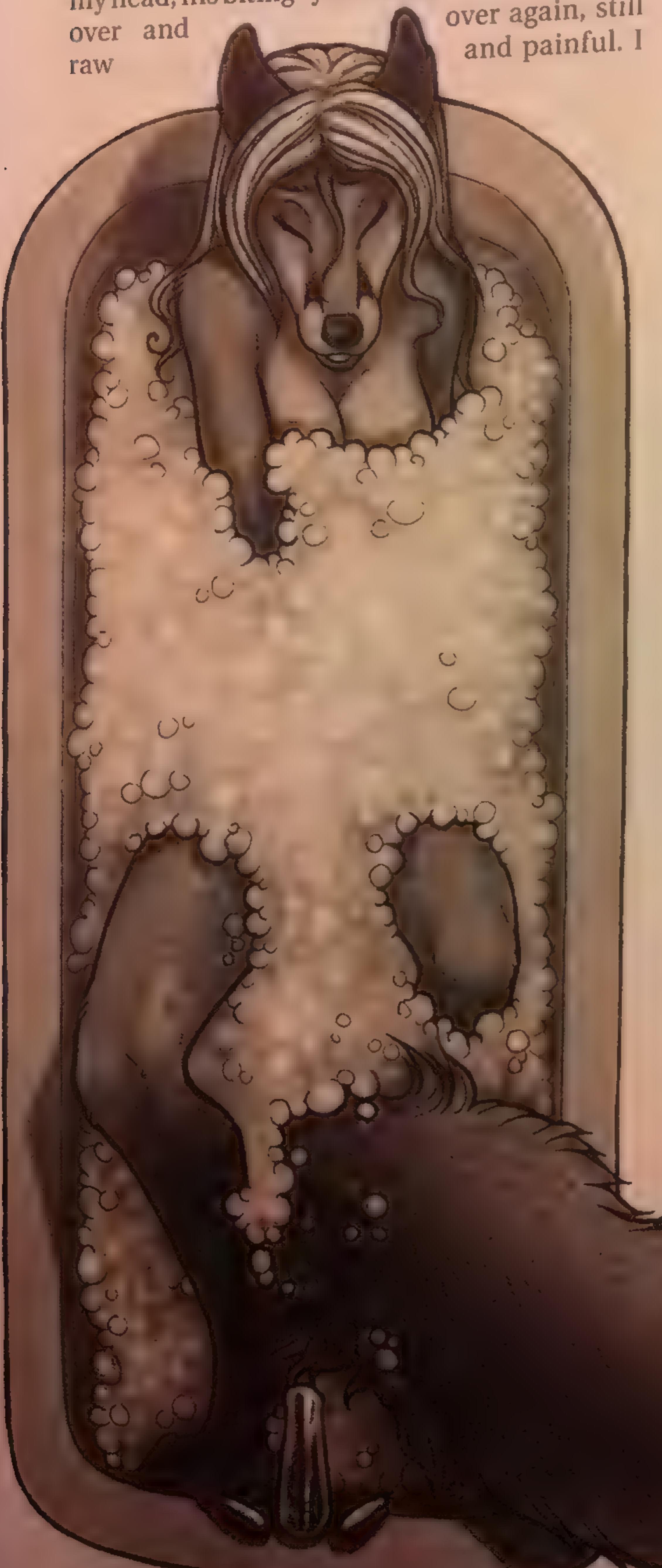
I laughed nervously. "Are you coming on to me?"

Her lips curled into a wry smile. "In case you haven't noticed, I have been since the day I met you."

I was taken aback; I hadn't expected her to be so candid, but I guess it was silly of me not to expect it at that point. Before I could even think of a reply, however, she pulled me forward and cradled my muzzle in her paws, then pressed her lips to mine. A sudden alarm rushed through me, several well-ingrained bells in my mind going off and telling me that it shouldn't feel as good as it did, that I shouldn't be enjoying this moment. By the time her tongue slipped into my mouth, though, all was forgotten.

I became acutely aware of just how thin my shirt was as Emily's paw slid under my jacket. Her claws traced the small of my back in a way that weakened my knees. She teased my lips with her own, and our tongues explored each others' mouths in a gentle harmony of warm, wet kisses. The press of her hips against mine made me yearn for something forbidden, unwholesome.

That final thought raged a war in my head. My conservative upbringing told me that everything I was doing was wrong, immoral,



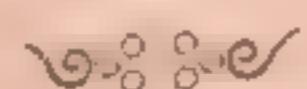
sinful. I could hear all over again my mother's admonishments when I would look at another girl in just that particular way that irked her. I couldn't continue; I pushed her away from me.

Her tawny face softened with genuine hurt and concern. "What's wrong?"

"I'm sorry," I whispered, averting my face from her. My ex-husband's accusations rang in my head, his biting "you're sick" remark playing over and over again, still and painful. I

would make any excuse I could. "I can't do that. I'm almost old enough to be your mother. It just isn't right."

There was no response. I kept expecting Emily to say something, but all I heard was the door open and shut as she left. The last of my strength left me, and I fell to my knees and cried.



A crushing gloom clouded the next few days and crept its way into my heart. Each day I waited at the bus stop, hoping that Emily might come by again. I supposed it was silly of me to believe that she would come back after how I treated her, after I had pushed her away, but hope is a funny thing. I felt supremely stupid, and I wanted desperately to apologize to her, but I had no way of contacting her.

Friday signaled the end of the week for me, and I was barely able to sit still at work. I tapped my pens on the surface of my desk as I stared out the windows and daydreamed, much to the irritation of my coworkers. Appropriately, a purple-gray storm gathered in the sky and soaked the afternoon with rain.

When five o'clock finally came, I bolted from my desk and headed straight to the bus stop, still expecting that my dreamy ocelot might show up at any moment. I barely minded the rain this time as it defeated my umbrella and seeped into my clothes. When I boarded the bus, I shook the water off my fur in a decidedly unladylike fashion, irking the other passengers. I paid no attention to them.

The bus rumbled from stop to stop as it always did, and as we approached each signpost, my heart began to race. Every time, I was disappointed; there was no sign of Emily. Several times I thought I saw her, but I quickly realized they were just other felines that reminded me

of her. Before long, I was close to my destination, and a few silent tears welled in my eyes.

It would be yet another evening alone. I walked sullenly from the bus stop up to my condo and shambled like a zombie



into my bedroom. I fell face-first into my bed, not even bothering to get undressed, and I curled round myself, hiding my face from the world. I hoped and prayed that sleep would soon deliver me from my misery.

~ ~ ~

Morning came quickly for me, and I wandered bleary-eyed into the bathroom. I was still dressed in my rain-damp clothes from the night before, and I smelled like a wet dog. Staring into the mirror, I couldn't avoid the sight of my bloodshot eyes and disheveled fur; the oranges and whites on my face looked somehow duller. This simply wouldn't do, I told myself. I had to get a hold of myself, and cleaning up would be the first step.

I drew a hot bath and filled it with foamy bubbles; a good soak would help me feel better. I slid slowly into the soothing waters, first my toes, then my ankles and legs, and finally my tummy and chest up to my neck. It felt absolutely amazing as the warm water seeped through my fur and down to my skin. Soon the weariness in my body fled, and I started to relax for the first time in days.

While I lay there in the tub letting my worldly concerns melt away, an urge nagged at me that I hadn't allowed myself to feel in probably twenty years or more. Along with my mother's other stern words, she had long since instilled in me a deep loathing for self-pleasure, teaching me that it was unclean and unwholesome. A sudden rebellious surge quickened my pulse. Well, dammit, I felt like being unwholesome.

Still, it was like committing a crime. I double-checked to make sure no one was looking, even though I knew that I was completely alone. Then slowly, carefully, I reached beneath the waters of the bathtub and sneaked my paw down between my thighs. The first sensations felt strange and unusual, which I suppose was understandable since I hadn't touched myself like that in recent memory.

Water and bubbles sloshed over the edges of the tub, and a sudden rush of self-consciousness slowed me, then stopped me cold. My mind raced faster than my pulse. I was making a mess, and this was so wrong. I was being unfaithful to... to... well, no one, really. It didn't matter, though, as all those voices rang in my ears again, their disapproval echoing against

my shame. A headache threatened between my ears, and I let out a long, low sigh to try and stave it off. After taking a moment to let my pulse slow, I stepped out of the bathtub and dried off.

I yawned and wandered back into the bedroom wrapped in a bathrobe. Sitting down on the edge of the bed, I tried to decide if I wanted to get dressed yet or not. It was so very tempting just to crawl back under the covers and forget about today completely. Then it caught my eye; that silvery reflection of sunlight from a day best forgotten. I don't know why I felt it important on that particular morning, but I had to look at it, even though I'd paid it no heed for nearly a decade. No, I take that back—I know exactly why it had to be that day.

Reluctant, I forced myself to stand and walk toward my chest of drawers, wringing my paws all the while. It lay innocently upon the unassuming mahogany, something I'd overlooked every morning of my life since Scott and I first returned from our honeymoon. The photo album, bound in garish sterling silver, wasn't just any photo album—it was *the* photo album, the one in which I dare not look for fear of dying of shame. I couldn't avoid it any longer; I had to force myself to face it.

Delicately I lifted it from its resting place, its metal cover burning cold in my shaking paws. I returned to the bedside and let it rest in my lap, and for a few minutes I just stared at it, wondering if I could really face what was inside. I'm not talking about my wedding; I'd already buried that in the divorce. There was still one more thing that ached in my soul, the true failure, so to speak, that I had never dared tell to anyone. I swallowed hard and turned the first page of the album.

The photos were still there, just as I remembered them. Scott and I under the arbor in my parents' backyard. Scott and I exchanging vows in front of the minister. Scott feeding me a piece of wedding cake. All the while, the same hollow smile stared out from the face of a younger, stupider me. Even on that day, I knew it was wrong, but I had so desperately wanted to be normal that I had sacrificed myself on that altar and destroyed who I was in the name of becoming the wife I thought Scott and my mother wanted me to be. Angry tears burned in my eyes; not anger at them, for they weren't to blame. I was angry with myself for believing I was doing the right thing.

as if I were lost in a desert for days. "Emily... What are you doing here?"

"I was worried when you ran off," she replied. "May a thorn sit amongst the roses?"

Her compliment made me smile ever so slightly, and I scooted over to make room for her. "You're no thorn, dear."

She sat down beside me, crossing her legs at the ankle. "Good to know. So what was that all about?"

My ears drooped. "I'm sorry. I saw you with that other girl, and I just felt silly for being there."

Emily laughed. "Oh, wow, I see now. That was my sister!"

I realized I was even stupider than I could have imagined, and I cursed inwardly. "Your sister?"

"Yeah, we're really close. Sorry if that threw you off."

I chuckled nervously. "No, it's my fault. I should know better than to make assumptions."

Her face turned serious, and I got the distinct feeling that she was mocking me. "Well, you know what they say happens when you assume things."

I nodded. "I know, I know. I have to admit, though, I'm surprised you're here. I thought for sure you weren't coming back after what I did. I just wished that—I, uh..." My voice failed me as I searched for the right apology.

She cocked her head in an adorably curious manner. "You... what?"

I swallowed hard. "I was scared. I'm sorry."

She nodded, causing her hair to fall around her face in a way that made me burn inside. "Well, here I am back again, no harm done. What were your other two wishes?"

I sat dumbfounded for a second, but then the giggles started to come, one by one, uncontrollable like a slowly growing leak in a dam. It was a silly joke, really not deserving of that much laughter, but I couldn't help myself. Despite my idiocy and embarrassment, Emily knew exactly how to put me at ease again.

She slid closer to me, and our knees touched. My heart raced. "You look gorgeous today, by the way."

I smiled genuinely, and my ears laid back in a fierce blush. I never would have described myself as gorgeous, dressed as I was in worn out jeans and a tee shirt. Before I could retort, however, Emily leaned forward and pressed her mouth to mine. I lost myself in the depths of her kiss, and a surprisingly intense yearning grew

deep inside of me, spreading outward from the pit of my stomach. We would need some privacy.

I disentangled from her tongue and beamed at her. "Would you like to come up?"

Emily tossed me one of her fanged grins. "Race you!"

She leapt up from the bench and darted for my building, and I frantically attempted to keep up with her. We laughed and giggled all the way up the stairs, ignoring the surprised and disgusted stares from my neighbors that we quite literally bumped into along the way. By the time we reached my door, my paws were shaking so much that I had a difficult time putting my key in the lock. Emily certainly didn't make it any easier; she was running her claws through my hair and nibbling on my neck.

There was a combined squeak of dismay as both of us fell through the doorway and crashed to the floor, and we laid there for a moment, tangled in each others arms. I looked up at her, my heart beating rapidly, and she grinned back at me in her usual toothy way. The ocelot leaned toward me, reaching for another kiss, and my breath caught in my throat as I instinctively turned my face away from her, ashamed.

"Hey," she cooed. "Don't do that."

I tried to catch my breath. "I'm sorry, I just... I mean... I don't know. This is all so... so *strange* for me." I avoided the urge to say "wrong."

Emily grinned again and pressed her pink nose against my muzzle in a manner that was meant to be comforting. "Then just enjoy it, silly."

Enjoy? It seemed like such a foreign word to me, but... I realized that she was right. It was just the two of us in my home, alone. No mothers, no husbands, no one that had any right to tell me no. The only voice saying nay was my own, the echoes of the past that rattled inside my brain.

To hell with it, I thought as I banished those fears to the darkness from whence they sprang. I grabbed Emily by the shoulders and pulled her against me, embracing her in the fiercest kiss I'd ever given anyone, man or woman. Her eyes widened with surprise momentarily before settling into a calmer repose, and she let me lead her with my tongue. I grappled her mouth with mine, and she went limp in my arms, completely submitting to my passion, which only emboldened me.

I released Emily from the kiss, but still I clutched her with my paws. She nuzzled me gently. "Perhaps we should go somewhere a little more comfortable than the floor," she suggested with a wry smile.

"Agreed," I laughed.

We pushed ourselves up to our feet, and before I was even standing, Emily was tugging my shirt off of me. I giggled, and clothes flew every which direction as we danced our way across the living room rug. Her arm around my waist, she spun me in a silent waltz that swept me off my feet and into the bedroom. By the time we fell laughing onto the bed, we were delightfully naked, and Emily wrapped herself around me like gift paper around a present. I could never remember feeling more happy or more comfortable than I was with her at that moment.

Searching paws felt along my body, teasing every inch of my back and hips. She lifted my tail and gently stroked my buttocks, and I nibbled at the soft fur of her neck in response. This elicited a tiny giggle, and her wiggling whiskers tickled my face. I couldn't help laughing myself, and I ran my claws up her tummy and between her breasts, relishing her lithe, delicate form and the soft, white fur of her underbelly.

Emily pushed me back against the silvery decorator pillows that littered my bed, spilling them over the edges. Normally I would have been dismayed by the chaos, but now I hardly noticed. I arched an eyebrow at her as I relaxed, and she returned my quizzical look with a devious smile. She pushed herself against me, spreading my legs with her hands as she leaned down to flick her velcro tongue across my left nipple. It was a sensation unlike anything I had felt before; her hot mouth explored my breasts, and her stomach pressed against my dripping slit in a way that left me begging for more.

My amorous companion had no intention of leaving me unsatisfied, however. She slid down the bed and placed her muzzle between my thighs, lapping gingerly at my swollen rosebud. Her careful, rough tongue glided up and down, paralyzing me with pure pleasure. My claws dug into the bedcovers, and I could hardly move as wave after wave of ecstasy washed across my body. Sure, Scott had done this a thousand times in the past, but never

before did it feel so *right...* and, well, Emily was so much more talented.

I moaned and squirmed as she continued, relentless. The motions of her mouth felt like a string of pearls sliding across my clitoris, the rolling, pulsing love of her tongue reaching every edge of my being, tingling in my shoulders and shivering in my buttocks. I ran my claws through her luscious, coppery locks and arched my back. My breaths came in quick spasms, and I caught the hint of a satisfied grin at the edge of the feline's muzzle. Before I could form another thought, however, passion exploded through me, a repeating surge of climax that crashed upon the beaches of my very soul. A series of whimpering yips came unbidden from my throat, and my fingers and toes curled, claws tearing at the sheets as the last of my lover's attentions rippled through me.

Emily finally relented and sat back on her haunches, smiling at me as she wiped my juices from her lips with the back of a paw. Oh, those delicious, glistening lips! Energy surged through me, and I leapt forward to pull her back down on top of me, sliding my eager tongue into her waiting mouth. A chorus of murring and purring passed between us as paws groped at breasts and hips and buttocks, a voracious thirst of passion that would not be slaked.

My partner wrenched free of my hungry kisses and touched a warm fingertip to my cold, wet nose. "It feels like you haven't made love in years."

I smiled and caressed her cheek with the back of my paw. "I don't think I have, actually. At least it feels that way."

She shot me a sly smirk. "My turn?"

I sat up and watched her with greedy eyes as she repositioned herself on the bed, pivoting her hindquarters toward me. She waggled her haunches in the air, teasing my muzzle with her tail. I grinned and settled on my knees behind her, lifting her tail gently. She moaned encouragingly with anticipation as my hot breath caressed her moistened vulva. Just to make her wait a few moments longer, I slowly traced my claws along the backs of her thighs, teasing and touching, counting each and every rosette on her lovely golden fur. She growled at me playfully, sensing that I was intentionally stalling. I returned her growl



with a cheerful yip, and I slipped one finger, then two, into her waiting slit. Her response was immediate and satisfying as she writhed under my paws, her soft murmurs of pleasure echoing my own excitement. I was like a kid in a candy store, and I almost felt guilty at how much I was enjoying her.

Without hesitation, I plunged my muzzle into her flowing love.

Emily's reactions encouraged and emboldened me. She mewed and pawed at the bed, her haunches quivering beneath my paws, and I drank heavily of her yoni, embracing her shivering pearl with my tongue. Her tastes and scents were gratifyingly feminine, and my muzzle became slick with her wetness. I licked my lips and continued to stimulate her with my paw. I could feel that she was quickly losing control of her body as her entire frame shimmered with delight.

With little warning, she let loose a howl of blissful release that echoed throughout the apartment and probably beyond, and for a

brief moment I was concerned about what the neighbors might think. Such thoughts were quickly forgotten though as she fell free of my lustful grasp, collapsing upon the bed with the kind of exhaustion that only comes from extreme physical satisfaction. Lazily, she rolled over on her back and looked up at me with such adoration that I felt tears of joy coming to my eyes. I lowered myself and laid next to her.

She smoothed the ruffled fur around my nose. "That was beautiful, Angie."

No reply could do the moment justice. That she called me "Angie" didn't even bother me; in fact, it was soothing. I closed my eyes and nuzzled her gently, enjoying the beating of her heart and her body's heat against mine. We laid unmoving, tangled up in each other's embrace, and I knew at that moment that my beautiful Emily was the person I had sought all my life.

I had never felt so at peace in over ten years.

The Storm

By: James R. Jones

He awoke from the gloom
To the open door and glow the glass
He turned over and again by the window then
He saw the lightning gleams in rolling night sky
The world in the darkness then open the door
Then upon him the light shone and radiance

He awoke from the gloom except from his heart
He awoke from the gloom then stepped to his
Golden eyes then went walking
Then he walked through the pass

He awoke from him his eyes still aglow
Golden torches in a midnight of black
A wolf heartbeat quickens, his breath coming faster
Broad footpaws fleeing to fire's hot bosom.

And then – in an instant
Senses in turmoil from the shattering blast
Ahead in the doorway, golden eyes see him
The bright flash illuminates the now-raging beast.

Time slows.

A muffled cry...
...then fiercely embracing,
Feline and canine, fire's passions ignite.

To Remember

Outside the storm unleashes its fury
Torrents of rain from a billowing sky.
Inside the dark room the storm rages blindly,
passion competing with Nature herself.

This night will be a storm to remember.

Cultural sounds fill the dark bedroom
a primal lust boiling up from the depths
Fiercely growls the wolf in his passion
til a thick feline kiss subdues the grey brute.

The universe spins, the wolf's senses reeling
caught unaware by passion's fierce bite
Was it the wind, or the wolf, that was howling?
Did lightning itself just shriek through his veins?

Fierce puma! Oh feline nature, to play with your prey...
Sharp claws pierce deep as he kneads the wolf's back
Still sharper the pleasure, as the rough barb thrusts deeper
Like rain, a hot fountain to prove his desire.

Panting and yowling, the lovers lie softly
still joined together by the pain of pure bliss.
Even the thunder outside can not cover
the raging inferno of fire such as this.

Alone in the blackness, two unlikely lovers
Alone yet together in the moment of fire
Though Nature herself rages blindly against it
two unlikely lovers share ecstasy's kiss,
illicit passions the light dare not name.

The storm clashes.
Darkness reigns.
But for two hearts forever, a storm to remember.



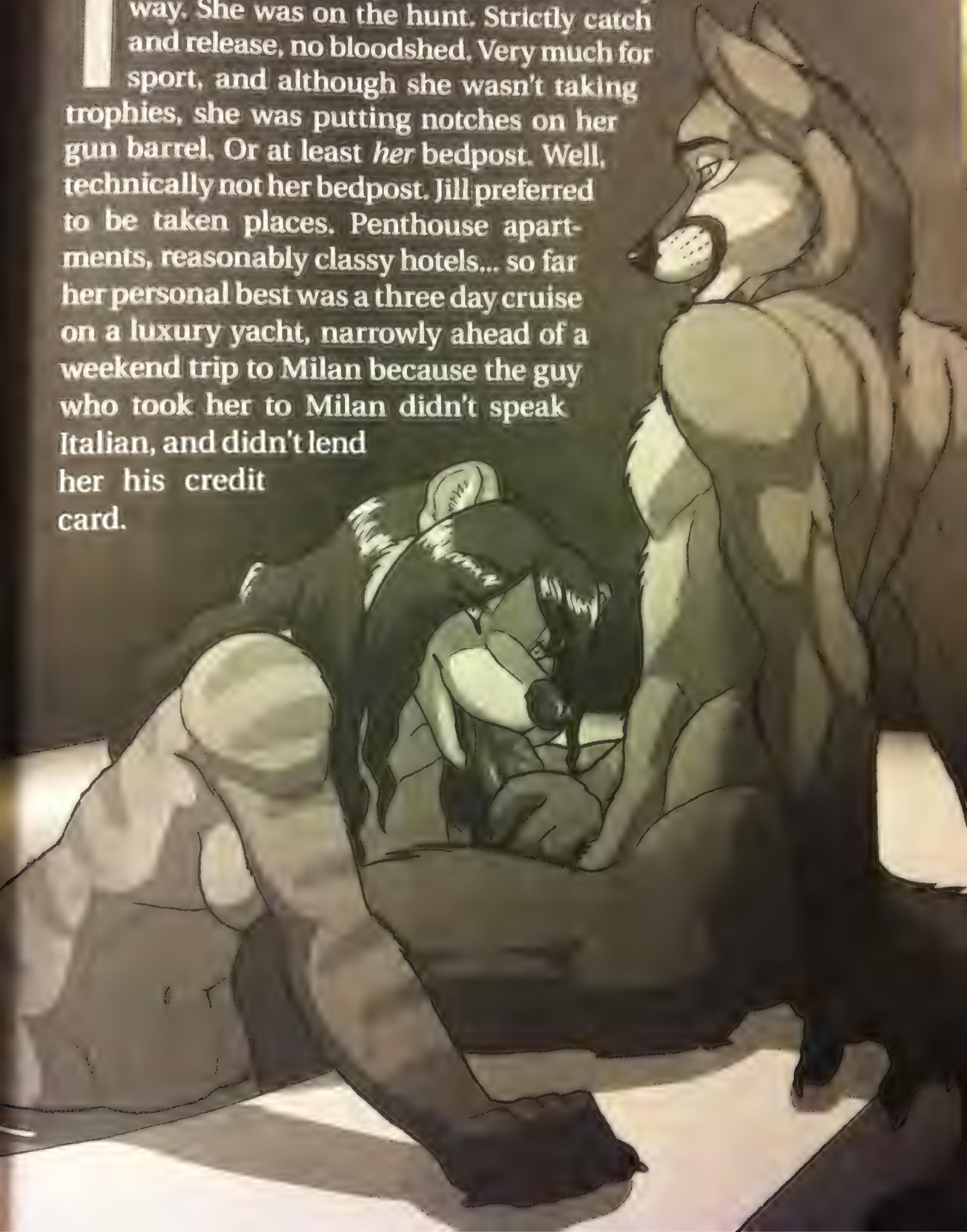
Ull's 49th



by foozzzball

Illustrated by TsaiWC

It was a silly analogy, but Jill liked it anyway. She was on the hunt. Strictly catch and release, no bloodshed. Very much for sport, and although she wasn't taking trophies, she was putting notches on her gun barrel. Or at least *her* bedpost. Well, technically not her bedpost. Jill preferred to be taken places. Penthouse apartments, reasonably classy hotels... so far her personal best was a three day cruise on a luxury yacht, narrowly ahead of a weekend trip to Milan because the guy who took her to Milan didn't speak Italian, and didn't lend her his credit card.



Jill's hunting strategy was very simple. Her tools of choice were a bottle of Kellmore Seduction in Eau de Toilette for her sensitive nose, a McCauley & Fern minidress in scarlet velvet, a pair of three inch stilettos that she and her sisters had gotten ahold of in a customized batch because human shoes hurt furry feet, and the bar at the Greystone Hotel, downtown. Honestly, if she was going to notch anything, it should be the bar.

The bartenders wouldn't appreciate forty-eight neat little gouges in their lovely polished hardwood, though.

She had forty-nine in her sights. Late thirties, maybe early thirties if his cosmetic treatments had a pricetag to match the Whitney's and Shaw single-breasted suit he was wearing.

"Buy me a drink?" Jill slouched her shoulder just enough to hint that the shoulder strap might just fall right off, poured on a smile.

He stared. Didn't say a thing, just stared, like the slim glass of booze in his hand was somehow responsible.

Jill kept up the smile. It was important to keep up the smile. She was a stunning redhead, a smile worked on anything with a pulse.

Forty-nine wiped his eyes disbelievingly. "I'm sorry, are, are you some kind of dog?"

"New in town, huh? I can tell by your accent you're from the States. Whereabouts?" She laughed, bright and bubbly and not at all embarrassed. Oh fuck no. She swept her short, blunt and striped tail to one side while climbing up onto the barstool next to forty-nine.

He kept blinking at her like she was some kind of freak. Staring at the end of her long, slender muzzle like he'd never heard a furry talk before. "New Mexico. Hell, this is weird."

"So. How about buying a girl that drink?" Jill rolled her shoulders, arched her back and tried to make it perfectly fucking obvious she was a woman, with tits.

The troubled expression that crossed forty-nine's face got him scratched off Jill's list. A little snap of realization mixed with revulsion. "Uh, excuse me." At least he had the decency to be embarrassed about it, slipping off his barstool and zipping off.

Jill jogged her foot agitatedly and faced the bar, biting her tongue.

"Geez. What was his problem?"

Jill twisted around. Gave the guy sitting down beside her the once over. Another furry. Gray fox, she thought they were a little older

than her clone run but wasn't too sure. Custom Barconi shoes, which couldn't have been cheap, but beyond that he didn't have the smell of money on him. Few furs did, unless they'd been adopted by a rich family for tax reasons.

He actually looked a lot older than her, the grizzled greys in his fur made sure of that. Jill slipped her heel out of her shoe, kicked it idly. "Guy thought I was a dog."

The fox squinted at her. "No, I'd say you're a catch."

Jill rolled her eyes. "Like as a species."

"You're not?"

"I'm a Thylacine. Tasmanian tiger."

He leaned back, eyeing her striped tail. Her bare thigh, too low for the stripes running down her spine and over her buttocks. "Tigers are orange. You're more... beach sand." He gestured at the back of her hand, a tawny yellow-brown. "Wet sand," he breathed, "and dry sand," he concluded, lightly touching her off-white throat.

"Buy a girl a drink? I like Margaritas, I'm Jill."

"Really? I'm Jack. We should find a hill." He smirked.

She laughed. "Bullshit."

"You're right. Dell Simons." He slapped his wallet against the bar's paypoint, eyeing the bartender. "Margarita and a Manhattan."

It was a fairly expensive wallet. Leather with gold fittings.

Jill licked her lips. "I take it you're a local."

"Nah, I'm one of the furries they made in New York," he teased, as if mass cloning of furs had happened anywhere other than San Iadras.

She scratched her chin idly, leaning forward enough for her cleavage to be blatantly obvious. Jill really wasn't too complicated. "So I bet you know all about having a good time around here?"

Dell hesitated, blinking at her. "Good time?"

"Just a good time," she murmured, licking her lips and looking deep into Dell's grey-brown eyes.

Dell's tail, with its black stripe, perked up, tense. "Uh, are you... pay for play?"

Jill was not having a good night. She grimaced. "No, I'm play for play."

"Play for play?" His ears twisted back with embarrassment.

"Right. You show me a good time, *maybe* I show you a good time." Jill leaned on the bar. "I like a good time, that's all."

"Ah. Hell, what a first impression to make." He picked up his drink, took a sip. "Sorry."

"Well, at least you didn't call me a dog."

"That's true. How about I show you a good time to make up for it?" he asked.

"Sure." Jill wagged her tail, just a little. She'd get her forty-nine tonight.

"So where do we start?"

"How about a limo? One with a bar."

Dell spluttered in shock. When he finished wiping his lips clean of liquor he blinked owlishly at her. "Wow. Uh. I wouldn't know where to get one."

Jill laughed. "Then you need a concierge service."

"A what?"

"Guys who do whatever you want." She sat up, throwing her hair back behind her shoulder. "How about we start simple, then? Dinner and dancing, right here."



Dell hadn't been quite at home with the food. Table d'hôte menus confused him. Perhaps it was a little mean to start him out at the Greystone, but he'd known enough to start with the cutlery furthest from his plate and work his way in.

The dance floor by the restaurant's live band was going down better. He'd taken to very slow and careful waltzing like a duck to water. Jill's right hand in his left, her left hand on his shoulder, and his right hand very promisingly against the small of her back. His fingers splayed when she twisted, just to feel her curves, she was sure.

But whenever Jill pulled herself closer, enough for her body just to brush his, he pulled back. She smirked, yanked him close and hissed in his ear, "Are you afraid of touching me, Dell?"

This time he didn't pull away. Not at first, at least. He drew back for a moment, glancing down at his feet. She pushed close after him, and he laughed abruptly. "I'm not."

"Good. We are out for a good time tonight, after all."

He averted his gaze, smiling guiltily. "I just didn't think waltzes had this much grinding."

"Grinding's different. This is just dancing close," Jill explained, stepping a little further forward when he stepped back, pressing her breasts against his chest.

He still had a bad case of infatuation with the curtains, but he flattened his hand against her back hard enough to hold her there. "Alright. What's grinding, then?"

"More like non-penetrative sex, just standing up." That got him spluttering again, and she grinned. "Much more a high school kinda thing to do."

Dell looked at her, finally. His gaze wandered across her face, down to her lips, and she rewarded him with another smile. A little lower, and he seemed to lose his breath for a moment. Better still.

"You smell good," he whispered.

"Thanks." Jill settled her head against Dell's shoulder. He cut his fur short, left it longer over his cheeks and combed it out in triangular wisps that tapered off from gray to a faint rust red. And he smelled like... no!

Jill pulled back and blinked at him, nearly throwing him off step. "You wear bespoke Barconis, and use *discount store* body spray?"

His ears perked uncomfortably. The curtains seemed very interesting again. "I guess I just don't know how to spend."

"Oh, I can help with that." She eased her head back to his shoulder, leaned a little weight on him and off her feet. She shut her eyes. Other patrons and a few dancers were staring. That was okay, she got stared at enough—furs were rare, she was beautiful—but she liked having a moment to herself with a man.

"I'm sure you can." He chuckled, pressed her closer, took a bit more of her weight, slowed. Soon they were doing little more than swaying together.

She slid her arms around his neck and hung from him, shifting her feet uncomfortably.

"Your ankles, huh?"

"Toes, actually," she whispered, content to hang onto him for now. "And my calves. They're miserable. You got a room here?" She cracked open an eyelid.

"No?"

"Y'know, I wouldn't mind soaking my feet. And the executive suites here have *massive* bath tubs..."

"Uh, you don't have to, uh..." He licked his lips nervously.

Jill trailed her fingertips along the back of his neck, against the grain of his fur. "Hey, I just wanna soak my feet." She batted her lashes up at him. "And they'll bring real good Champagne to the room, if we want..."

The hotel's complementary bubble bath had *sparkles* in it. The jets caught them and made the water a giddy, swirling delight. Jill hiked up her skirt a little more and sat on the edge, trailing her feet through the warm suds. The little bits of sparkle caught in her fur, she pushed her foot underwater and they made her flesh tingle, fizzing up in trails of bubbles as they dissolved.

Sloshing ice and the clink of glass announced Dell at the bathroom door. He'd taken the time to kick off his shoes, too. Shifted his foot back and forth over the heated tiles curiously. Grinned, when he caught her looking back at him. He waggled a pair of Champagne flutes, an ice bucket dangling from his other hand. "Look what I got."

"Oooh." Jill twisted round. "What kind did they bring?"

"Cristal. The bellboy said it was pretty good, but I thought Cristal was more like rum." He knelt down beside her, giving her the Champagne flutes and setting down the ice bucket.

"Nooo, that's *Colombian* Cristal. This is *French* Cristal." She put the flutes down on the far side of the bath's rim where they'd be safe.

Dell got the foil off the bottle's neck and unclipped the wire cage. Set his thumbs against the cork and-

"Ack! No no no!" Jill leapt from the bath, her legs streaming water. "Don't you know how to open Champagne?!"

"Uh." Dell flattened out his ears guiltily. "This... isn't how?"

"No." She rolled her eyes and grabbed the cloth wrapped around the ice bucket's handle. "Gimme." She waggled her fingers at him insistently.

He gave her the bottle, she wiped it dry from the ice and held it at an angle. "See, your way, you're just going to put a hole in the ceiling with the cork. Like *this...*" Jill held the cork tight, eased the bottle back with a slight twist.

The bottle sighed briefly, urgently.

Dell covered his mouth with a hand, blinking. "Wow."

"They call that the loving whisper." She glanced up at him sharply, gave him back the bottle. "How do you *not* know how to open Champagne, Dell?"

"Oh, I'm lower-middle class," he teased, carefully holding the bottle and pouring into

the flutes, afraid to spill, afraid of knocking the neck against the glass.

"Lower-middle class." She rolled her eyes, catching the back of the bottle to support its weight. "That explains the body spray, but not how you got the Barconis. What do you do for a living, anyway?"

"Cleaner," Dell rasped in his best attempt at a rough voice.

This time, she spluttered. "What?"

"Janitor," he clarified, ears dipped guiltily, tail low. He eased the bottle back into the bucket.

"No," she giggled. "Not with bespoke Barconis."

"I am! Sort of." He leaned against the bath's side. "Part owner of a building maintenance and cleaning service. You?"

"Office. Handle inventory. Hate it." She slipped one of the flutes into his hand. "Work your way up from the bottom?"

"Almost. Cleaned floors with my brothers when we were teenagers. Saved up, got an automated floor buffer, saved up, got window cleaners, saved up, got the contract for Hallman Towers... hundred and fifty floors that need cleaning every day." Dell smirked.

"To success, and being able to afford my footbath." She held up her flute.

He laughed, touched his against hers with a sharp ring of glass. "To footbaths."

"Footbaths and more," she murmured. She took a long sip, slipping back into the water.

Dell chewed the inside of his cheek, ears flat and guilty again. "You shouldn't feel... obligated."

"I don't." She caught her lip between her teeth, fighting off a grin. Another quick sip and she set her Champagne down, and sank to her knees. "I feel... wet," she concluded, easing herself under the warm water, bubbles lifting her dress.

Dell's eyebrows shot up, along with his ears, his tail.

Jill was hoping for more to shoot up than that, but she'd have to wait for his pants to come off first.

"Uh." He took a gulp of Champagne, not a sip. Set his glass down beside hers uncertainly.

Jill writhed under the bubbles. "I'm out for a good time, Dell." She got the zip on her dress down. Flipped it out of the water and slapped it down on the tiles. "Are you under the impression a woman doesn't have a good time when

she's with a man?" She lowered her eyelids dangerously.

"Uh," he stammered, again. He rose up on his knees next to the bath nervously. "I just don't want to pressure you."

She lifted her bra, dripping, out of the tub, and dropped it over the side. "Then allow me to pressure you." Jill licked her lips, very slowly. Very deliberately. She shifted side to side and got her panties down. Flicked them at his chest.

They were light, and lacy, and she'd figured on having a man peel them off her tonight. Instead, Dell peeled them off his shirt. He blinked, slowly took that off too.

She rose out of the water and groped in the ice bucket. Caught his hand and filled it with cubes and yanked it to her breast. The ice stung against her tan nipple, already hard. "Get in the tub, Dell," she moaned against his mouth, wrapping her arms around his neck.

He crushed her breasts in his hands. The ice cubes slipped out and plopped into the bath one by one. His mouth was hot, and his teeth were sharper than hers, and his tongue a lot more forceful.

He followed her in on his hands and knees, and his limbs tangled with hers. The bands of rust red in his fur became more prominent when wet, the black stripe down his spine almost glossy.

His trousers clogged one of the jet intakes, he struggled a little to get them off—they clung, so Jill got

him to stand up and she helped, on her knees. When they were off that left his erection right in front of her.

Jill wrapped her slender fingers around it, and familiarized herself with every little curve of his throbbing cock. "How long does it take you to get back up after you've come, Dell?"

"Not long," he whimpered, sitting heavily on the tub's rim.

"Good." She brushed her slick wet hair from her shoulders and sank back into the warm water. "I find a man fucks me better on his second time around." She pumped him, once. Heard water drip off his tail a little faster as he wagged. "Taking the edge off."

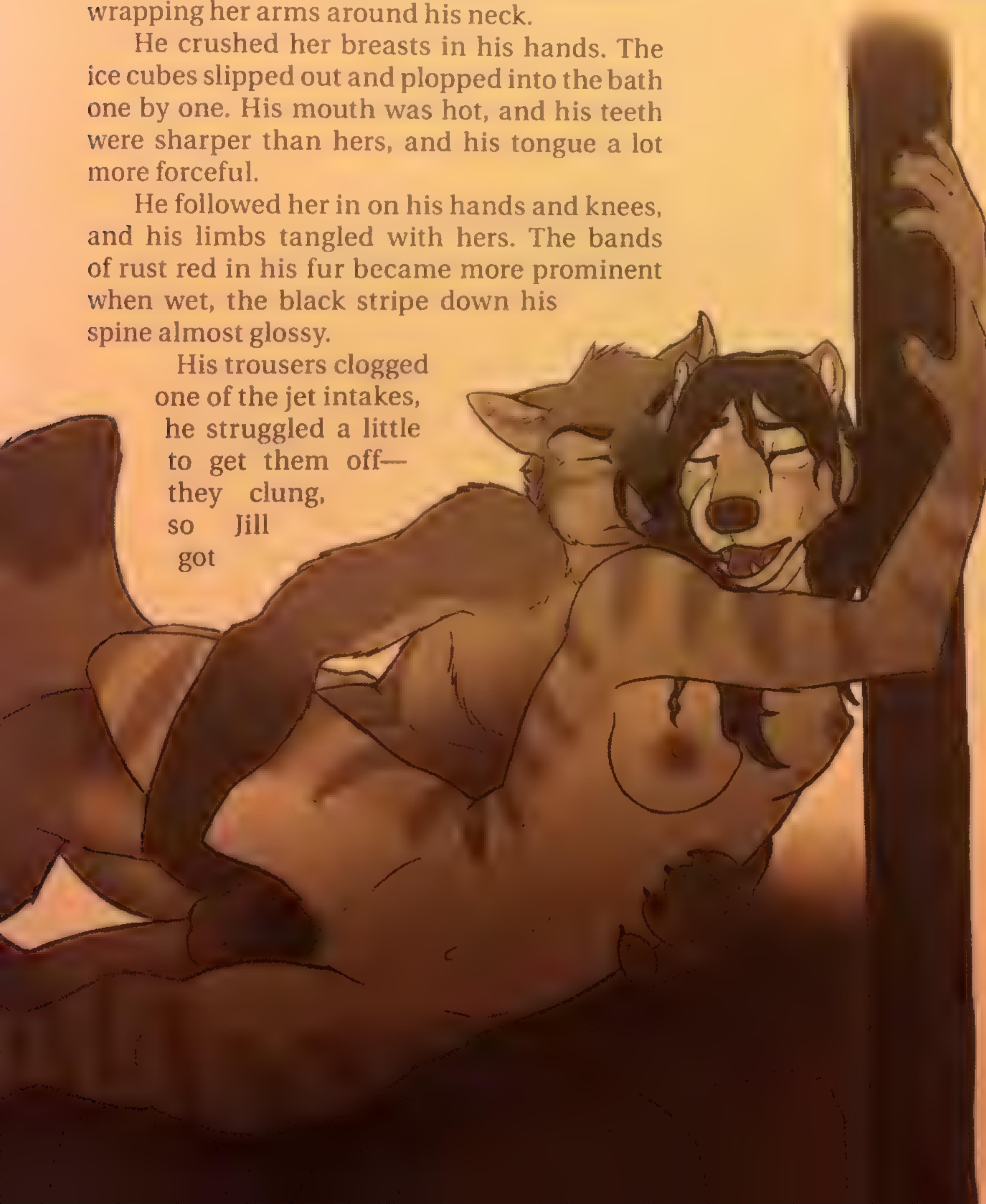
"Yeah?" He shivered. She felt his toes curl beside her knee.

"Yeah," she replied, licking her lips again, stroking him slowly.

"I think, uh. In, uh, consideration of, uh." Dell clenched the tub's rim tight enough that water squeezed out of the fur between his fingers. "Maybe you could, uh. Take that edge off."

She settled her lips over his glans, and he sighed. Just like the bottle of Champagne, short and urgent. She ran her tongue along the underside and nosed her muzzle down, and he moaned. Jill had the whole of him in her mouth, her muzzle was that long, and she rubbed her nose against his crotch. He liked that. He liked it when she worked her jaw and swirled her tongue around his shaft, slipped it back and forth.

She pulled back, sliding the tip of her tongue around the tip of his penis. He



settled his hand in her damp hair, lightly, not heavily, and gently pulled her down. Pushed her back, settling her into a pace he found comfortable.

When he tensed, tail slapping wetly against the bath's side, his grip in her hair tightened. "God, Jill, I'm..." He moaned, unable to finish his warning.

She wouldn't mind swallowing, but in case he didn't want to she pulled away, holding his cock tight. She stuck out her tongue and dipped down, lapping him in the open.

Dell shuddered, she tasted the sting of salt and a little acid tang in a hot little spray, a second shudder and a little bit more. His glans throbbed against her tongue, she could feel his come on her chin, a little between her breasts, burning hot.

When his eyes focussed back he watched her pull away, a string of semen linking her tongue and him before she lapped it up. He took a long deep breath. "God."

"Better clean me up," she teased, dabbing her finger against her breast and licking it. She sank back under the water slowly.

Dell shivered in anticipation and followed her under.

His hands were firm, which was good, and the sparkles fizzed in their fur. He certainly cleaned her, but his thumbs were hard against her nipples and there were also kisses in her hair, a slow fingering that got her in the mood for more out of the tub.

There weren't any dryers, so Dell laid towels out on the big four-poster bed for her to lie on. He scrubbed her dry, the towels rough on her fur and dragging heat through her flesh. He spent a long time on her breasts, left her nipples tingling, and tasted them. Because of that there were parts of her he couldn't dry, even though he tried. He started gently at first, rougher when she'd begged him.

Jill clutched one of the bedposts and climbed partway up it. Arched her back and flicked up her tail, exposing herself to him.

He was hard, achingly hard, and he'd needed no encouragement to take her from behind. He held the tip of his penis between her labia, slipping back and forth. She reached down and forced him into her.

Dell clutched her thighs and began to thrust, slow at first. He always hesitated, so she clung to the bedpost and slung herself back and forth, hard, groaning and whimpering until he was forced to follow her rhythm.

He throbbed between her legs, like he'd throbbed in her mouth. His shaft was silky, up to the end, where his glans rode hot inside her, grinding up and down like he knew exactly how to scratch an itch in her she hadn't felt until right now. She pulled herself against the bedpost and writhed her hips. "H-harder," she stammered, again and again, until each collision of his hips against her backside pushed her higher on the bedpost. She ground her face against it, jaw slack, tongue snaking out against the polished wood.

Her clit pulsed and ached until she wanted to hump the post for relief. She must have said something, screamed something, because Dell pulled her back down on his shaft, his fingers tight around her hips, slamming her backside against his pelvis over and over until the ache was unbearable and her legs were shaking so hard she couldn't hold herself off the bed, and she clung to the post for dear life while the breath burned out of her in fits and aching gasps.

She shuddered and shivered, skin afame and crotch *molten*. He was pressed up so tight in her, tight and rock hard and she couldn't help clutching harder and harder until he whimpered, shuddered against her and in her just like she was trembling around his cock, and somewhere deep in her there was golden heat, and she knew she was coming too, but she didn't know when she'd started or if she'd ever stop. She slumped face-first on the bed sheets and after another two strokes she felt him soften in her, finally, finally, and she tried to catch her breath as he pulled out.

She couldn't, she couldn't catch her breath. "More?" she begged, rubbing her thighs together, finding them sticky and hot.

Dell yanked up her tail. He got his middle and ring fingers down to the second knuckle in her before she started shaking again, moaning out while her nipples chafed across the smooth sheets like embers.

She had her forty-ninth notch, alright. She'd need a fucking axe to put it into the bar.



"Jill?"

"Mm?"

"Stop doodling and concentrate."

Shame flushed her face under the fur.
"Sorry."

Fridays were the worst. She could get through the week alright, but by Friday she wanted to feel downright glamorous again, even stuck in stupid flat-heeled sneakers and with an orange safety-jacket yanked over her clothes so she could go through the warehouses, which wasn't really part of her job but she had to do it anyway.

She could be elegant. A sexy man-killer, which would've helped her career if her boss wasn't a straight woman.

As it was, planning notch fifty and watching the clock weren't part of her job.

Manuel tapped the pad in front of her. "Now remember, on Monday the new shipment of barstock is coming in. I need you to go around with Natalio and clip samples for the lab, first thing."

Jill grimaced. "That's Oleg's job." She'd have to run the cutter, and oh god that thing was scary.

"I know, but I need you to do it anyway."

She held her head for a moment. "Okay."

"Good. A courier brought this." Manuel lifted a basket onto her desk. Flowers. Three feet wide. A thousand tangles of blue and yellow and green flared to all sides around a column of scarlet roses, tied with a red velvet ribbon.

Jill picked up her jaw after she realized Manuel was staring. She clamped her mouth shut and smiled at him.

"New boyfriend?"

"Uhm." She crossed her feet under the desk. "Kinda?"

"Remember the barstock!" Manuel laughed and left, shaking his head.

Fuck the barstock. She leapt from her chair and buried her nose in the soft petals and oh god it smelled sweet. Excitedly she scabbled through the foliage for the card. It wasn't one from the flower service, it was a *business* card. From Simons & Simons & Simons cleaning services.

"Shit." She couldn't help from grinning. "You didn't give me your number," was scrawled on the back. She scrolled the tiny display. "Here's mine. Dell."

Jill rolled her eyes thoughtfully and picked up her phone. Held the card against it to get the number.

It rang once, twice. "Is that Jill?"

She wet her lips. "How'd you find me?"

"Secretaries. Almost as good as concierges. Apparently there are a lot of Jill Dixons, but I remember you said you worked with inventory."

She paused. "If I'd changed my last name by marriage you wouldn't have found me."

"I guess you're single then."

"You know I don't go with guys twice, Dell. There's no challenge in it."

His voice dropped low, husky. "I don't think you had that much of a challenge with me last week."

She laughed. "The challenge was getting you to act like you had a class other than lower-middle."

"Well, I'm still a putz." He paused a moment. "So where do you want to go for dinner?"

She shut her eyes. Curled her toes thoughtfully, thinking back to checking in the mirror to make sure she didn't have splinters in her tongue off the bedpost. The mints on the pillows they'd eaten after. The feel of him coming in her.

There was always Saturday night for fifty.

"Uhm. If you pick me up from the Greystone around nine I'll show you where, but it's a surprise." She might as well gouge him for her favorite, after all.

"It's not Annalise's, is it? They're so overpriced..."

Jill rolled her eyes. "Mmn. See you nineish."



The long black stripe running down the back of Dell's tail seemed to point directly where he wanted her to go. Hell. "I remember reading an article."

"Mm?" She wrapped her arm around his, smiling innocently.

"A bank refusing to pay for expense account dinners here after one of their employees dropped *sixty-five grand* on feeding a party of four."

"That was four people, sweetie. We're two." She dragged him along, grinning.

"God. Why'd it have to be Annalise's?"

She squeezed his hand. "They do pressed foie gras, with this really fruity sauce and, and smoked duck? Or roast pigeon." She bit her lip, mouth watering. "You've never tasted anything like it Dell, I swear. The best is their tortellini starter, they make it with *salmon*. Real salmon, not vat grown, *real*."

He swung her hand back and forth. "You like that salmon, huh?"

"It is *heavenly*," she breathed.

The doors, cut glass engraved with a European street scene from centuries ago with

gaslit lamps and horse-drawn carriages, slid open for them.

Natural stone tiles covered the floor, hand woven rugs covered the tiles, light classical music covered the bubbling of conversation. There was a candle at every table, providing an intimate glow. Jill loved it. The place had a wonderful atmosphere and *important* people dined there. It was the kind of place photographers hunted for film stars, and she'd been in the background of celebrity pictures more than once.

The maître d' met them with a smile at the front desk, carrying a tray of Champagne flutes, fizzing away. "Good evening."

Dell slipped his arm around her waist. "Hi. Uh. Table for two?" he tried.

The maître d' smiled, quite indulgently, glancing back at the seating area. "I'm afraid you'll need a reservation, sir, our seating's otherwise full tonight, as you can see."

Jill lifted her shoulder enticingly, smiled. "It's okay. I'm sort of a regular?"

He hesitated. "Yes, we do see many of your sisters here..."

"And a lot of them are me." Jill resettled her weight from foot to foot, hoping to get some relief for her calves. "I was here three weeks ago with Taylor Godfrey?"

"I'm sorry, I really couldn't say." The maître d' shrugged helplessly, wearing a winning smile. He set his tray of Champagne down on the front desk.

Jill's stomach lurched a little. He wouldn't be able to tell her apart from her sisters, would he? They were all clones after all, she couldn't blame him, but, but... "But I'm here twice a month. Usually not with the same guy but..."

"I am sorry."

The maître d' smiling didn't help one bit.

"You do takeout?" Dell asked.

The maître d' boggled at him. "I'm sorry?" It was as if sorry was all he could say.

Dell glared at him. "It's a perfectly reasonable question."

Maybe back in lower-middle class land. Jill winced with embarrassment.

The maître d' simply stared.

Dell's teeth ground together with a sharp rasp. He narrowed his eyes at the maître d's nametag, slipped out his wallet, thumbed down a payment, and slapped it down on the front desk's paypoint. Eep, there went five hundred New Dollars.

"You do takeout?" he repeated. The maître d' lifted his eyebrow slowly. Dell slapped it down again, the leather loud against the paypoint's plastic. Eep, and another five hundred New Dollars. Eep, eep, and Dell kept glaring. Eep, twenty five hundred rupees. It was all in the wrist, he whacked it down again and again. Eep, eep, eep and bloody eep-eep.

Dell plucked a loose flute off a tray and slugged it back like one of his Manhattans. He still didn't know how to drink Champagne. He slipped his wallet shut with an air of finality. "You do takeout," he said again. This time it was an order.

No more "I'm sorry" from the maître d'. Now it was, "I'll see what I can do."



Dell picked up one of the little tortellini pasta rings, with his fingers no less, and held it to Jill's mouth. She sucked his singertips clean.

"Good?"

"Mmm."

Dell smiled.

The park was a little cold, and empty, but the bench was all iron coils in a classically beautiful style. The skyscrapers were towers of light cleaving at the sky. There were barely any stars, but there were helicopters flashing red and green, a few bright blimps, a cooling breeze that ruffled Dell's fur, parting the grey to reveal a peppering of rust red here and there.

She tongued the pasta until it unrolled, the soft, delicate, almost creamy taste flooding her mouth.

Dell tried one from the little bowl they'd been given — they'd saved half for dessert, because she liked it so much. The platters they'd finished with they'd simply left on the far edge of the bench. He chewed, but he didn't savor with delight. He didn't get it, he had yet to figure out food. Yet to figure out Champagne, either. He was figuring out Jill okay, though.

"Here's the last one." He held up the last of the tortellini.

Jill jogged her foot slowly. "We gonna share it?"

Dell put it to her lips and kissed her. She chewed, real slow, real gentle. The pasta, his tongue, the salmon, his lip.

Annalise's pasta was good, but so was Dell's lip. She chewed on that for awhile, a long

tangling kiss. He pulled back to breathe, sucking down gallon-sized breaths.

She unknotted his tie and dragged it off his neck. Tugged open a button and dipped her face to his throat. "You probably could've got us a table, like that," she whispered.

"Sorry." He set the bowl with the other platters, leaned his head back. "I'm new to bribery."

"What do you call getting me takeout from the best restaurant in town, then?" She hiked her dress up her thighs and slid onto his lap, straddling him, kissing his neck.

He blinked at the sky. "A good time?"

"Okay." She opened another two buttons. Dug her nose against his Adam's apple.

His eyes slid contentedly shut.

She skipped three buttons, opened another. Skipped the rest of his shirt and tugged open the button on his slacks with a pop.

His eyes shot open.

She eased his boxers down and wedged them under his balls, stroked his firming cock slowly.

"Uh." Dell straightened uncomfortably under her, bracing his elbows against the back of the bench.

"After-dinner delights," she wheezed in his ear.

He firmed up fast, solid in her hand.

Dell nervously glanced around the empty park, tail swatting around uncertainly between the bench's slats. "Ah, Jill, is, this, uhm..."

She hiked up her skirt. Pulled her panties taut and twisted them aside, over her buttock. "Nobody's coming," she breathed, "except you." She held him steady and dropped down onto him, biting her lip raw to keep from making a sound.

He quaked under her.

She pulled her skirt back down over her thighs. "There. Now I'm just sitting in your lap, and we're making out. Nothing to see."

His jaw was slack, and she kissed the top of his muzzle. Lower, his nose. Lower still, his lips. His chin, the side of his jaw where his fur was rusty red.

She held the hem of her skirt down and rose up and sank down and writhed her hips side to side.

His gaze drifted down. His hand was unsteady as hell as he grasped her skirt and lifted up just one fold, pressing it against her stomach and watching as she rode him gently until he

came hard, in a quiet and cold park that left them too hot to breathe.



Jill was stuck on forty-nine. She wanted fifty, but a couple of weeks ago Dell got a proper reservation at Annalise's. Last week Dell took her to the opera. Tonight it had been much more sedate, a ballroom dance club. He'd taken lessons or something, but they'd had to stop early again—her feet hurt. He hadn't told her, she'd worn her huge high heels. One way or another, she just wasn't getting around to fifty.

She expected his apartment to get boring after visiting it so often, but he had a good one. Not a penthouse, but luxury, halfway up a twelve floor block. He had a view of the ocean and there were always different ships out there.

"What's that one? Is that a cruise ship?" She pointed out his window at the horizon, the little bump with its flashing lights.

Dell sat on the bed beside her, scrubbing his head dry. He squinted, flicking an ear. "I think that one's a container ship."

"How do you know it's not a cruise liner?"

"Because cruise liners look like that." He pointed at a blue-white speck and settled behind her, wrapping his arms across her naked breasts.

She squirmed, but only to get her tail out from under his ass. His lips came down on her neck, and she bent her head aside. "I think it's a cruise ship," she whispered contrarily, pushing her shoulder back into his chest, offering him the most sensitive part of her collarbone.

Dell dug his teeth into her fur insistently. "You angling to get me to take you on a cruise?"

Jill sucked her lip thoughtfully. "I'm not not trying to get you to take me on a cruise."

Dell laughed. "Always up for a good time, huh?" He pulled her close.

She smiled, leaning back on him. "Yeah, you're my plaything."

"You're a real man-killer," he teased, nipping her throat. "Out every weekend, getting fortunes spent on you..."

"That's how it works. I'm real exotic, furry and all. I get anything I want." She reached over her back, rubbing at his ear the way he liked. "All week is boring, boring, boring. Friday I turn into one of the glitterati, all glamour and glitz, until Sunday afternoon, when my chariot turns

into a pumpkin and I have to wash the makeup out for Monday morning."

"You do? I somehow pictured you being glitzy every night."

"Nah." She dipped her gaze, jogging her foot over the edge of the bed, making her new anklet jingle. "I just go out and play on weekends. I keep telling myself when I hit fifty I'm quitting my job."

"Fifty?" His arms slackened a little.

Jill wound her foot in a slow circle. He'd given her an anklet last week, a little gold chain. She intended to take it off, but hadn't yet. Jill took a deep breath, twisting around to face Dell. "You're forty-nine."

"Forty-nine?"

"Yeah. I'm play for play, remember? You're the forty-ninth guy to show me a good time." She smiled.

Dell didn't smile back. He didn't frown, either. He did pull her close and settle his chin on her shoulder, though. "Huh. Didn't realize you'd count."

She dragged her hand through his hair.

He kissed the back of her ear. "How would you feel about having it stay at forty-nine for awhile?"

Jill slumped in his arms. "Can't we just stick with playing? Good times only?"

"Sure." He kissed the side of her throat cautiously. "But couldn't we be more, too?"

She glared up at the ceiling. The floor. Not his arms around her, not his hands. Pretended that she couldn't feel his warmth against her back. "We could just fuck, too. I mean, we're not serious or anything. We're just sharing a good time." She leaned forward and broke free of his arms. Twisted around to face him. "We've got all kinds of options." She bit her lip hesitantly.

"Could I take you out more often, at least?"

"We talked about that." Her heart thudded nervously. "Just weekends. Not Sundays."

"But Jill!"

"Let's not fight. Please?"

Dell's arms were limp on the sheets, his expression trembled. Darkened a little, until he nodded the once. Another nod, another, until he simply bowed his head and rolled away from her. "Yeah." He flicked his towel off the bed and scraped back the covers. "Okay."

Jill knelt on her side of the bed and watched him cover his shoulder. "You gonna sleep?"

"Yeah, sure," he whispered.

She waited a long time, just watching him breathe. Finally she slipped the covers down and slid into bed, pressed herself against his back.

He didn't respond, not when she kissed his shoulder or ran her hands along his sides, or ever so gently brushed her fingers against his abdomen.

"Just gonna lay there all night? Like a lump?" She gave his shoulder a little shake.

He flicked an ear. "Guess so," he sulked at her.

She lifted her leg. "M'kay." Pulled his tail between her thighs and scissored around it. "I'm gonna fuck you."

His ear perked. "Uhm."

"Whether you like it or not," she whispered, scooting down and yanking the brush of his tail against her vagina.

She rocked back and forth, grinding her pelvis down, pulling his tail straight out behind her, soft fur washing back and forth across her clit, hard flesh of his tail wedged against her cleft.

Her breathing was quick, wheezing into his ear. "God. So soft," she purred.



His tail jerked side to side lightly in her hand, between her legs. "This probably counts as rape, you know."

Jill panted in his ear. "You telling me to stop?" she grinned, jogging her pelvis quicker, harder. She hissed in pleasure, her knee rapping against the back of his leg.

"Uh... Not stop, as such. No."

She kept humping his tail. "Good," she moaned. Then she reached over his body, grasped his hard shaft, and jerked him off.

Dell certainly didn't complain about that.



Jill tried not to count, but she couldn't help it. Three dinners at Annalise's, not counting the take-out. Two trips to the opera, a couple of limo rides, nine weeks, ten weeks...

She knew Dell well enough to be able to discern between the three kinds of blowjobs he liked, fast and bobbing, slow and lucky, and suckling his tip like a candy treat. He liked the last kind best for having a great orgasm, the second kind best for tangly foreplay that might result in him coming in her mouth or might just be a prelude to sex, and the first kind for a quick little 'hello', taking the edge off.

Jill hadn't known these things about a guy, or wanted to know these things about a guy, in years.

She didn't like how possessive he was getting. He was late picking her up from the Greystone once, trouble at work, and she'd teased that if he'd been any later she would've found fifty. It put him in a bad mood all night.

It was selfish, but she only wanted good moods. Good moods and good food and great fucking.

Tonight was shaping up like that, dinner at Margot at the Palace, but Dell was in a good mood. Almost too good a mood.

He smiled all through dinner and made small talk and held her hand a lot and insisted they have sweet wines after dessert and she'd just started to relax on the second glass, but that second glass must have bolstered his will, because he ruined everything.

Jill hadn't known Dell could ruin everything, but Dell was good at surprising her.

"I thought we could compromise." His voice was so earnest, his face so certain.

Jill kept her voice a little cold. "You want it to stay at forty-nine. I want fifty, maybe not soon, but, I want fifty."

"How about forty-nine and a half?" He had his hand in his pocket, fingers fumbling, and that scared Jill worse than anything.

Dell slipped off his chair. To a knee. Held up a tiny box. "Your other half."

He opened the box. It had a blue lining. The diamond on the ring glittered.

Jill smiled sadly.

He waited, eyes so hopeful.

"I've already got one, Dell."

His face fell.

"It's in a drawer at home. Well, just the wedding band." She crossed her legs. "I sold the ring years ago. Your diamond's bigger, though."

"What?" He snapped his fist shut around the box, face hard, hard because he didn't want to feel. Not now.

Jill shrugged. "I'm sorry, Dell. I got married out of high-school." She snuffled against the back of her hand. "I haven't seen him in about four years, but I'm still married to him."

He held out the little box again, hopeful. "You could divorce."

It was from Tiffany & Co. She recognized the logo. But she didn't take it. She just slugged back her wine, like he slugged back his Manhattans, and waited for him to get her a cab, so she could go home. Alone.





For precision engineering, material quality was very important. Robot rigs and computers could build things and shape metal to very tight parameters, but they had to know all about the materials they were using. Just one impurity or oddity in the mix could result in bends and nicks and failures.

Jill felt like she knew all about being bent and nicked and a failure. But she also knew that she had to get samples for the lab to look over, and at least she hadn't had to *use* the cutter this time. Oleg was around, but they needed her on the warehouse floor for it anyway and the thing screamed and spat sparks with flashing blades and scared her.

She'd tripped on the way back into the office, too. She was tired of having trouble dancing on high heels, so she'd been wearing little kitten heels—pumps with heels just an inch and a half high, really small, just enough to help her calves stay used to stilettos. It turned out they were high enough to twist her ankle on, though.

Not a bad twist, it was just an ache now, but she'd fallen hard on her knee. It hadn't bled but it still hurt, and all in all Jill felt miserable. She wanted to quit but she was afraid she wouldn't find another job. She hadn't gone to college. She'd gotten married instead. It was all a huge, horrible mistake.

She had a way out, though, if Dell would go for it. It'd solve everything.

So after shutting the door and sitting down with a cup of coffee until her nerves stopped jangling, she called and asked.

"How about you make me your kept woman?"

He was quiet a long time. "You know how awful that is, right?"

"It's your forty-nine and a half, kinda, isn't it? And if you get sick of me or whatever, we can call it off." She jogged her foot. Slowly, because of her ankle. Her anklet tinkled.

"Not if you quit."

"That'll be my problem, not yours," she snapped. Winced. She shouldn't have snapped. She rested her head against her hand, leaning on the table. "God, Dell. I'm so fucking miserable."

"I know. Just, mistress? God, that's sleazy."

"What's wrong with a bit of sleazy?" she tried, hopefully.

He groaned with frustration. "I can't handle that, Jill. I'd feel like shit."

"Okay." She covered her eyes with her hand. "Well. Just a thought. I'll see you around, Dell."



She didn't see him around. And Jill didn't mean to count, but she nursed one drink, then two. She let someone else buy her a third. She was on the hunt again.

On the hunt, with her cunt. Ready to kill with a glance. She was trying to decide who fifty was. Tall old guy? Too old, even if older guys could be nice.

Really, Jill just liked the *look* of older men. Less shine and desperation, more grit and old school glamour. That's why she liked Dell, Dell with his gray fur and peppery red that made him look ten years older. Her forty-nine.

Jill pinched the bridge of her snout. It was a public hotel, a public bar. Dell would show up if he wanted to, he wouldn't show up if he didn't. It was that easy.

She looked around the bar until she caught someone's eye. He was early twenties, a trust fund boy. Maybe even younger than her, by a hair. She smiled, he smiled back. Didn't glance away or look uncomfortable. He edged over two stools and sat next to her, grinning. "Hi."

"Hi." She smiled. Nobody could resist her smile.

"I'm Tom." He offered her his hand.

Tom smelled just right. She gave his hand a minuscule little shake. "I'm Jill."

"What's your drink?" He'd do for fifty.

"Margarita."

"I'll have one too," he said, holding up his hand for the bartender.

She felt surprised when the bartender put down two Margarita glasses, side by side, both with feminine curves, instead of her Margarita next to Dell's Manhattan in its sharply angled cocktail glass.

The surprise would wear off.

"Miss Dixon?"

Jill laughed. All of her sisters—except the married ones who hadn't kept their last name—were Dixon. "Yes?"

It was the hotel's concierge. With a broad, thin box. "For you," he said, setting it on the bar and leaving.

It had a lace bow. She liked lace bows.

Tom lifted an eyebrow curiously, sipping at his Margarita.

Jill smiled back at him, shrugged, and opened the box. More lace inside. Lots of lace. A feather duster. Jill frowned and pulled out some of the cloth. The frilled lace corset of a French maid's outfit hung in her hands. A business card clattered to the bar top.

Simons & Simons & Simons cleaning services.

She read the back. "New compromise. If you'll fuck the boss, I'll hire my girlfriend."

Tom grinned at the corset. "Nice."

Jill rolled her eyes and felt a blush working its way into her ears. She bundled up the outfit and shot Tom a sorrowful smile. "It seems you'll have to excuse me, sweetie."

Tom pouted.

Jill didn't care. She swept up the Simons & Simons & Simons card and her outfit and swept right out of the hotel and into a cab.

She called Dell. He picked up on the first ring.

"How the hell did you manage to send me *this*?"

Dell laughed. "You were right about concierges."

"Well. Is there an interview for the position?"

"Hm?"

"Well you can't just hire without interviewing for the position." Jill set the feather duster to one side and smoothed out the lace. "That's a huge labour law fuck up."

"Uh..."

"You're still at the office, right?"

He paused, uncertain. "Yeah."

"Good. I'm on my way. I'll get this on and then we'll have a little interview for the position."

"Jill. What position?"

"The 'on my knees with my face in your crotch' position."

He cleared his throat. "Right."

"You didn't think you'd get away with 'hiring your girlfriend', did you? That's much too wholesome for a sleazy girl like me."

Dell laughed.

Strictly catch and release? Well. Maybe she'd keep forty-nine.

Who gave a damn if they revoked her hunting license?





THIEF!

AT SPEARPOINT

BY BLACKTEAGAN



MAKE WAY!
MOVE IT!

C'MON,
MEN!

URH...

FANCY
MEETING
YOU HERE,
LINAS.

HAEM.

WE REALLY
CAN'T KEEP
RUNNING INTO
EACH OTHER
LIKE THIS!

SHUT UP,
HAEM.

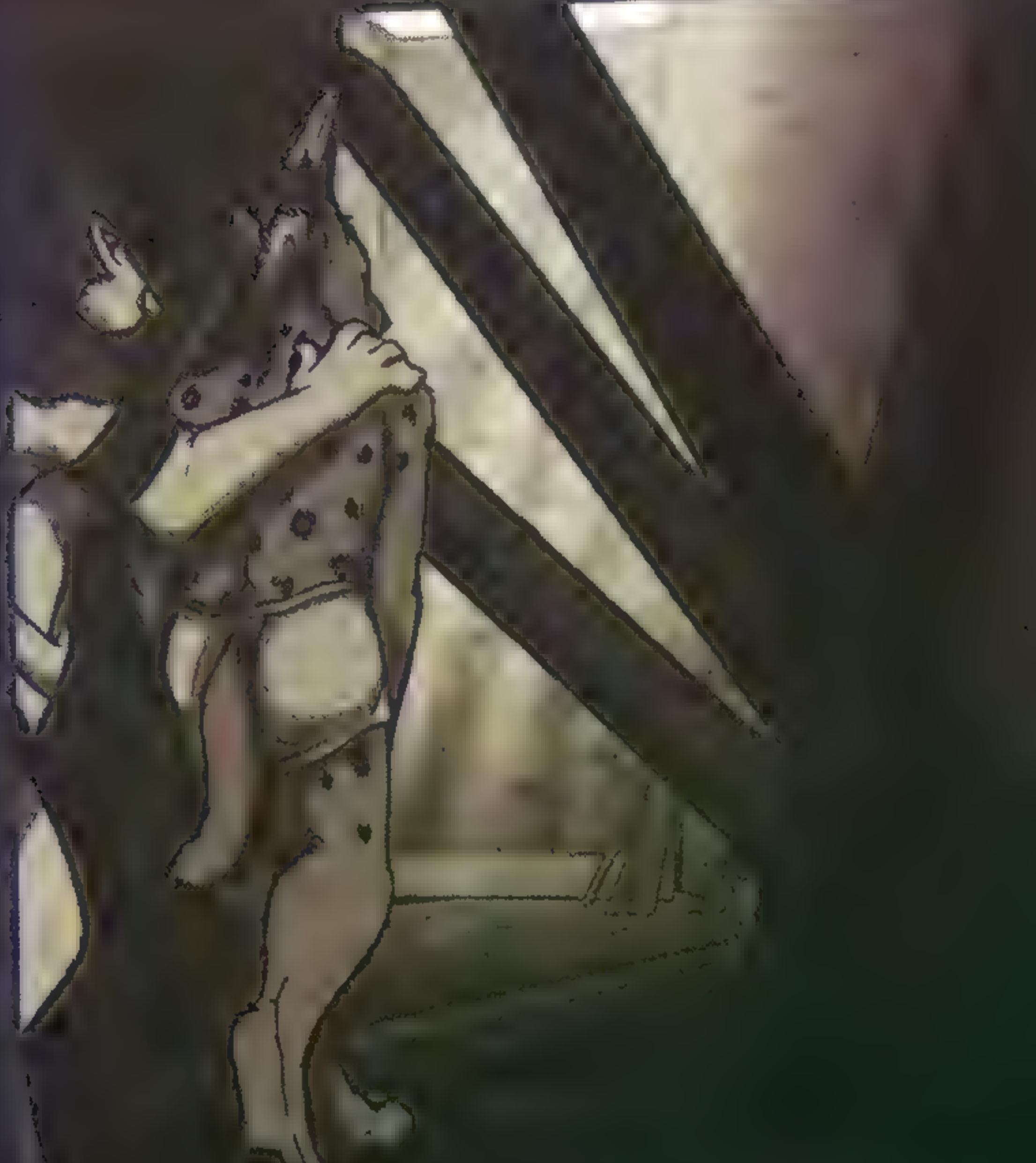
IT'S NOT
A JOKE.

SOMEDAY, ONE OF THE
OTHERS IS GOING TO
CATCH YOU AND
YOU'RE GOING TO
LOSE A HAND—

—BUT HOW WILL
I KEEP MYSELF
ENTERTAINED ON
THOSE LONELY
NIGHTS!—

—OR WORSE,
YOUR NECK!

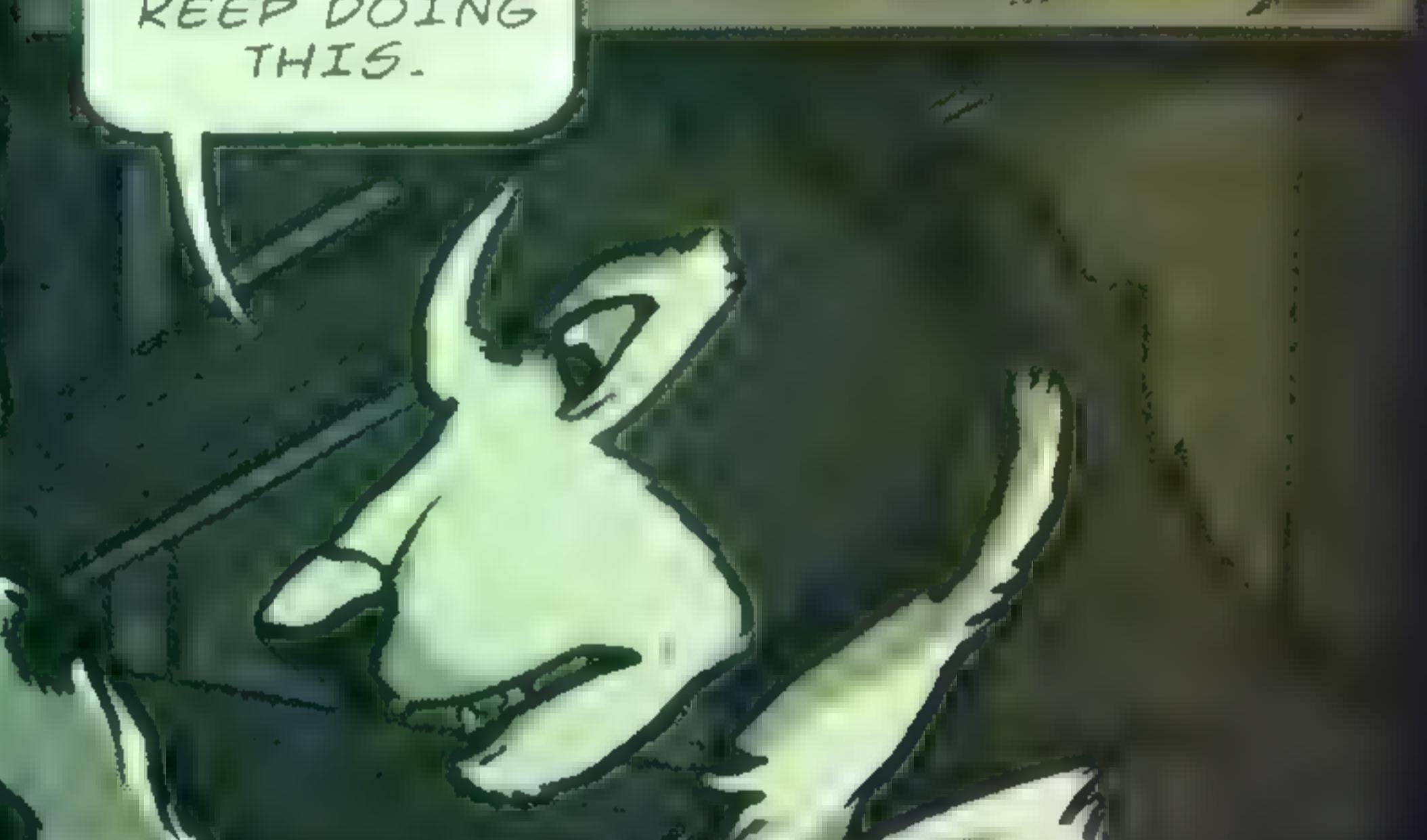
I FAIL TO SEE
HOW THAT'S
WORSE!



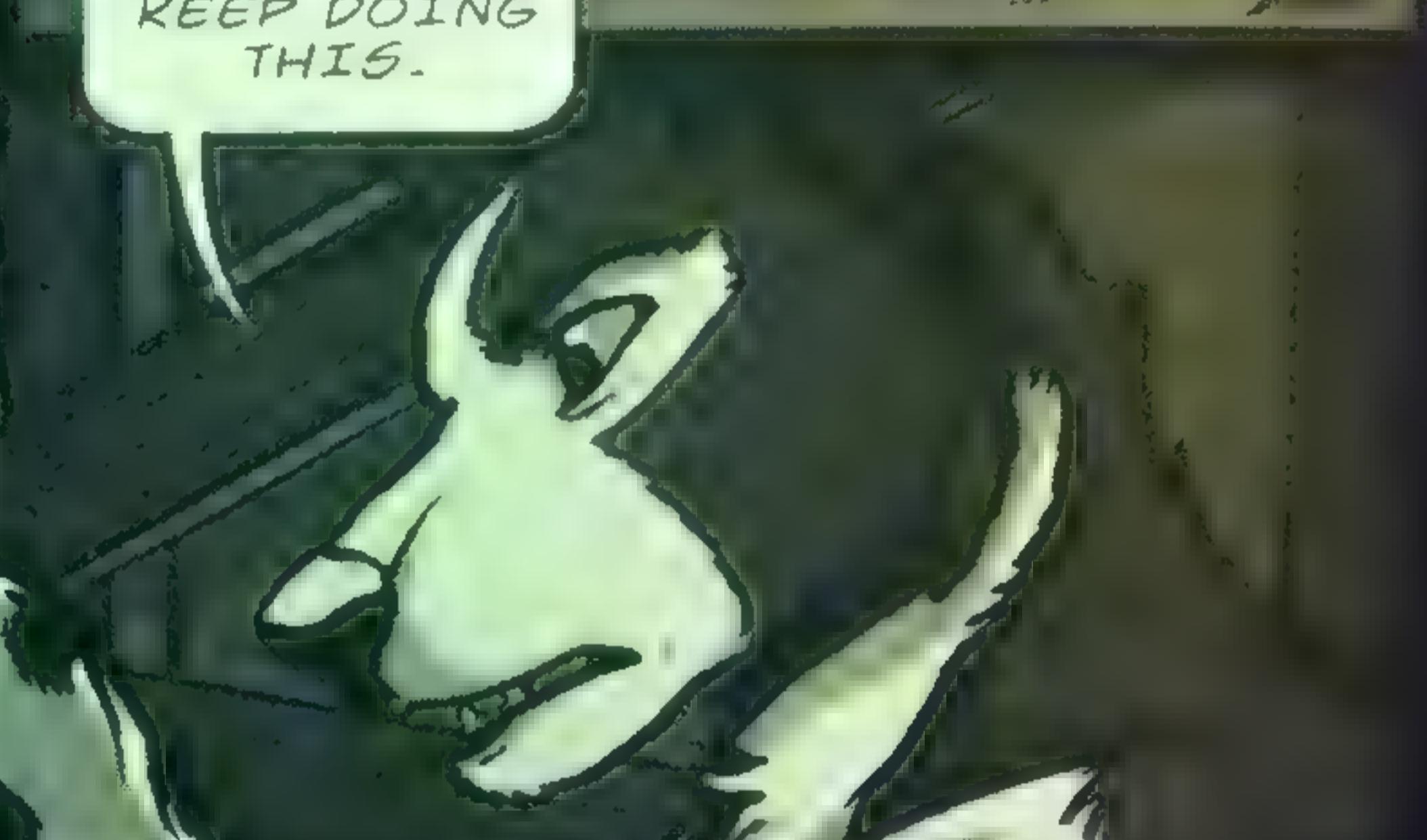
I HAVE A ROUGH
TIME AS IT IS IN
THE CITY WATCH.



YOUR STUNTS
LIKE THIS JUST
MAKE IT HARDER
ON ME, HAEM.



EVENTUALLY,
SOMEONE IS
GOING TO
CATCH ON!



I CAN'T
KEEP DOING
THIS.



BUT IT'S SUCH A
GREAT EXCUSE
TO BE ALONE!



YOU, CUT OFF FROM
THE OTHERS, CHASING
A MISCREANT DOWN A
DARK, DIRTY HOLE.



I'M BEING
SERICUS
HAEM.



AND I'M
JUST SERIOUSLY
APPRECIATIVE
TOWARD MY DASHING
GUARDSMEN—

I'M NOT IN
THE MOOD,
HAEM.

THEN...

IN THE
MOOD FOR
LUNCH?

NOT IF IT'S
STOLEN.

SPARE ME,
LINAS.

I GRABBED
IT FROM
OLD GUM.

IT'S FAIR RETRIBUTION
FOR THROWING ROCKS
AT US WHEN WE WERE
KIDS, I'D SAY.

THE ONLY WAY I CAN
SEE THIS ENDING IS
YOU IMPALED ON
SOMEONE'S SPEAR,
AND IT KILLS ME.

A FOOL WILL RUN
HIS LUCK TO THE
BITTER END.

I KNOW YOU,
HAEM. YOU'RE NOT
A LUCKY GUY.

DON'T YOU MAKE A
DIRTY JOKE OUT OF
THAT, YOU PERVERT.

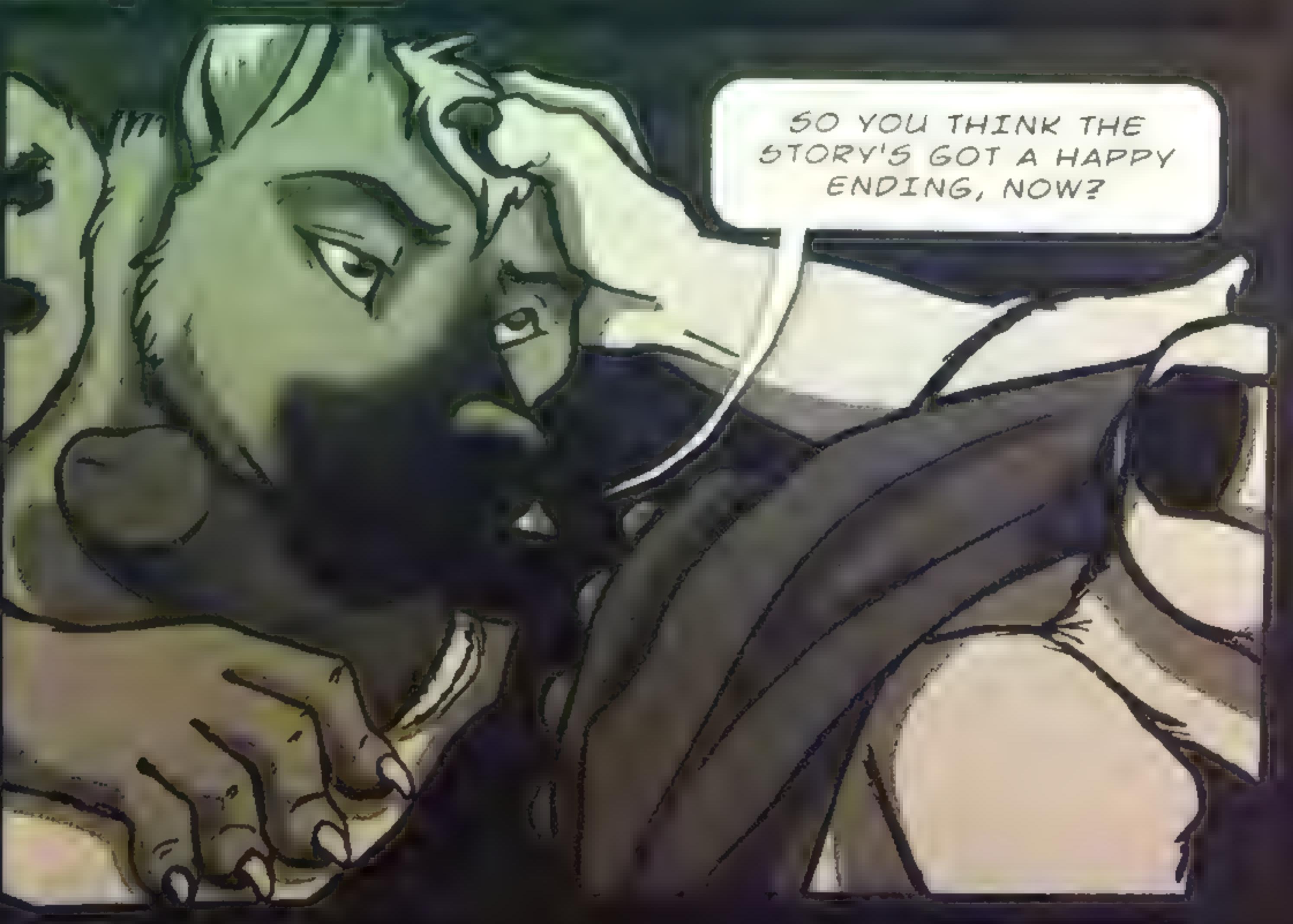
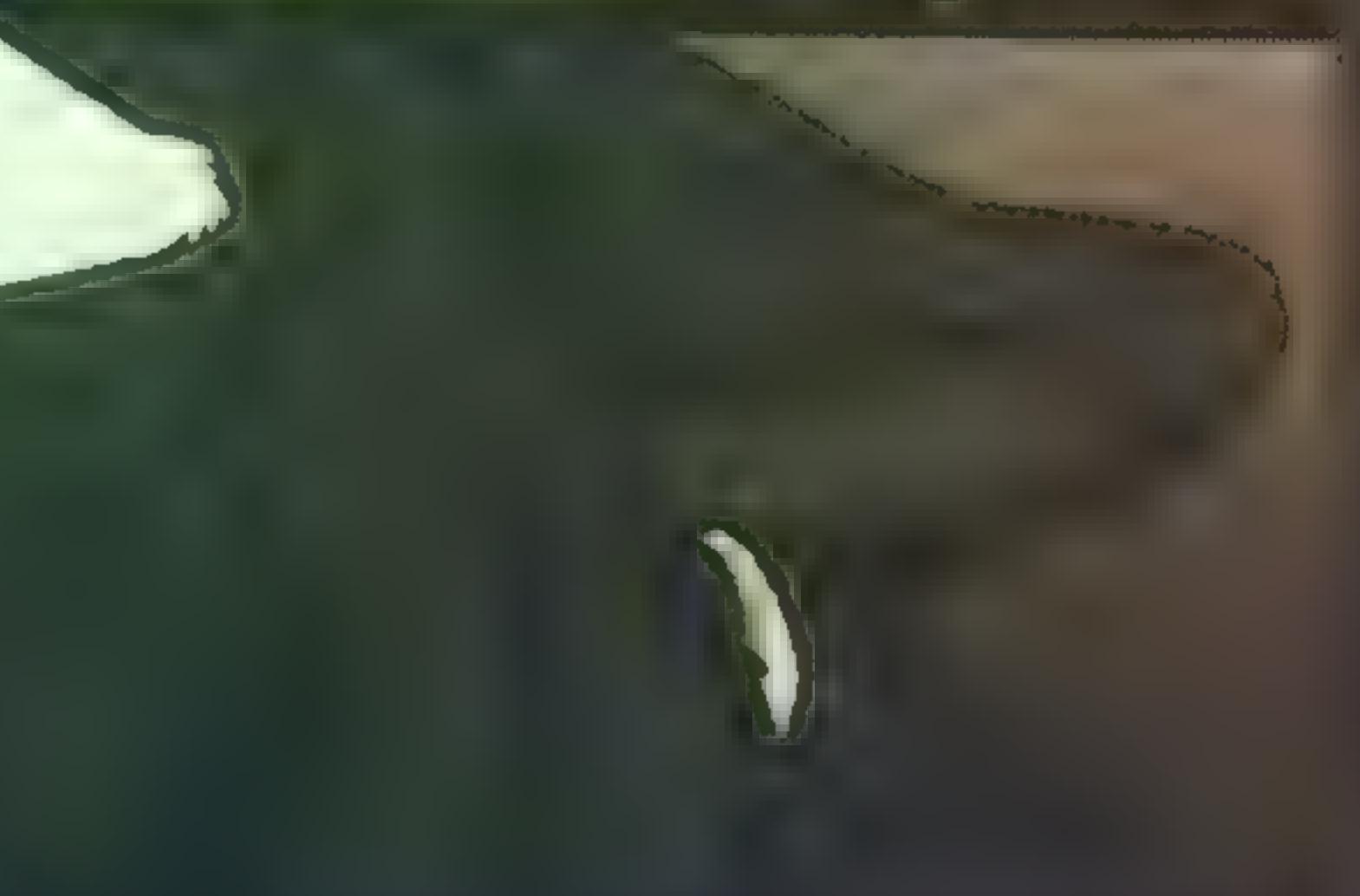
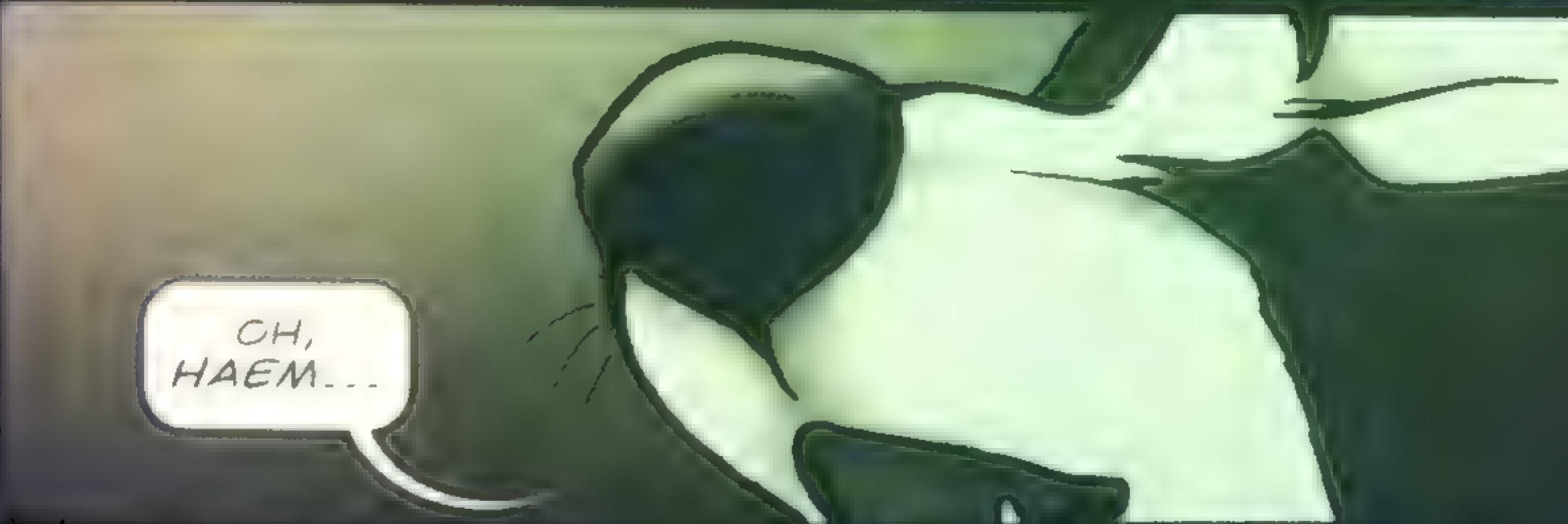




IF SOMEONE
CAUGHT US
LIKE THIS...

GODS
WE'D
HANG.

NO ONE'S
AROUND













AND
YOU-

STAY OUT OF
TROUBLE.

SEE YOU
TONIGHT.

YOU CAN KEEP
YOURSELF OUT OF
TROUBLE THAT
LONG, I HOPE.

IF THIS IS
YOUR METHOD OF
DISCIPLINING ME...

BANK ROBBERY
AND CAPITAL
CRIMES MAY BE
IN MY FUTURE!

NEXT
TIME...

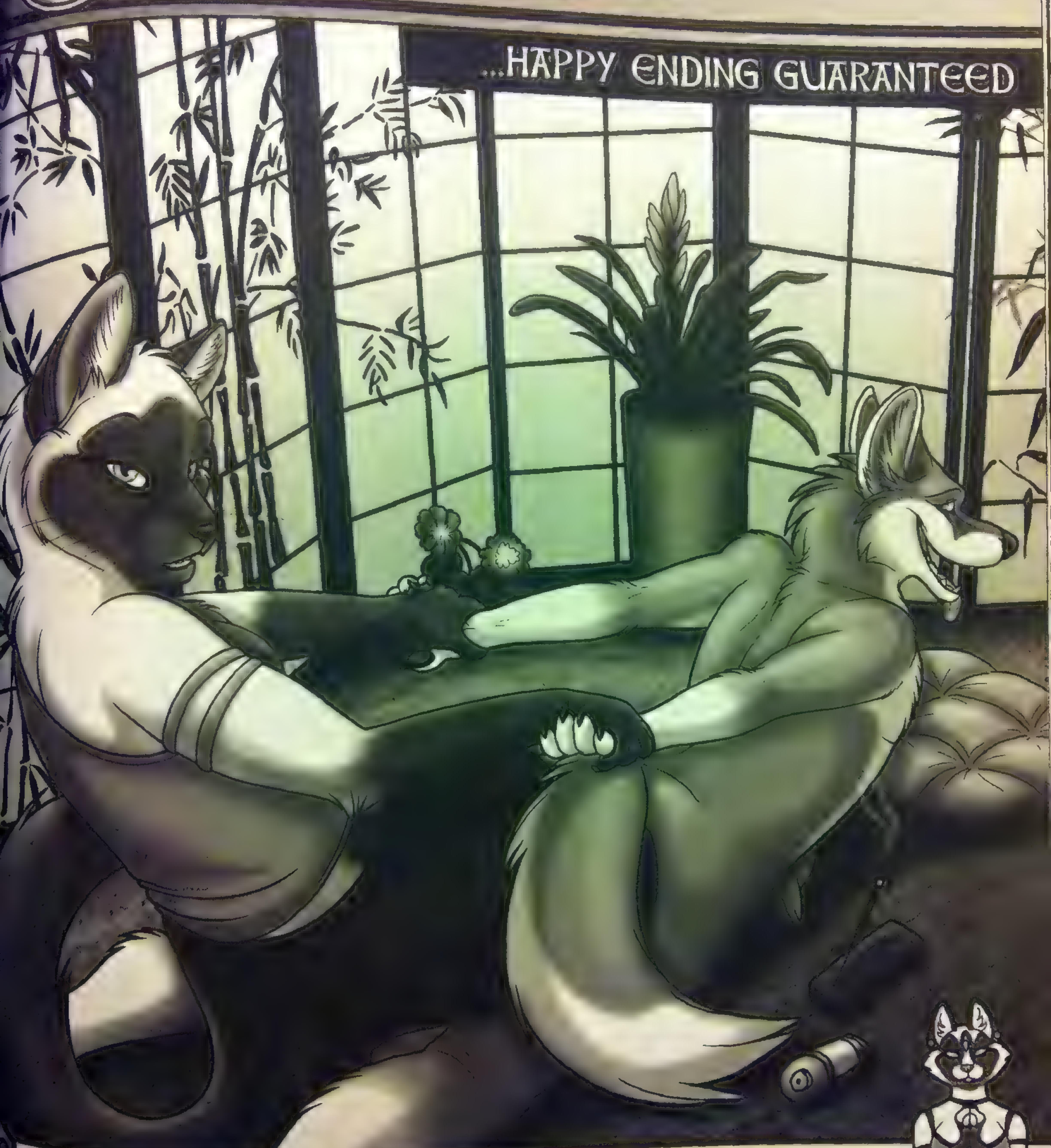
WHY DON'T YOU TRY
TO THINK ABOUT THE
REWARD FOR GOOD
BEHAVIOR, INSTEAD!



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EROTIC MASSAGE STUDIO

...HAPPY ENDING GUARANTEED



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- PURR THERAPY
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Stagnated



by K.M. Hirosaki



Waking up to my boyfriend sucking my dick was nice, but it would have been a bit less awkward if I hadn't just been in the middle of dreaming I was fucking somebody else.

As I let out a little groan of pleasure, I could feel his tail thump the mattress. He was proud of himself, and even though my eyes weren't even open yet, I could still clearly see the smirk he had on his lips, wrapped around my cock though they were. Since I'd just been dreaming that I'd been under someone's tail, my brain still wasn't making complete sense of the disparate sensation of a blowjob, but hey, it was a good blowjob, so I'd allow my boyfriend his pride.

Slowly, I opened my eyes, and I lifted my head just enough to look down along the length of my body to see Justin holding position, his gaze just waiting to lock with mine. His big black ears flicked, and sure enough, there was that smirk on his slim, foxy muzzle, looking exactly as I'd imagined it, exactly as it looked whenever Justin thought he was being clever and sexy at the same time.

A bit too clever for his own good, this time, what since my morning wood hadn't really been intended for him. Not like that was under my control or his. Still, it wasn't as if I wasn't going to enjoy it.

So I thought, at any rate. After closing my eyes again to relax and just feel my fox's snout sliding up and down my length, I let my mind wander, and it wandered right back to where it had been before I'd been woken up. For the briefest of moments, it was kind of hot, indulging in some naughty fantasy while actually getting my cock serviced, but guilt started taking over soon thereafter.

That guilt started to blossom and spread, making it harder to enjoy the muzzle on my shaft; that, in turn, started to make my erection falter. For a little while, Justin just tried sucking harder, and his earnestness and effort just made me feel worse for him, and that quickly killed off what was left of my arousal.

Realizing that no amount of sucking was going to keep me from softening up, Justin pulled off of me and scooted up along the bed a ways. "Everything okay?" he asked, his tone nice and simple and casual.

"You know how morning wood is," I said. Which was true enough for a non-answer.

Justin's arousal was more real, though—even my nose could tell me that much. I couldn't see down between his legs because of the way his body was turned relative to mine, but I knew his scent, and I knew that he was hard and ready to go. I made the mistake of making eye contact with him, and when he smiled at me, I had to smile back.

"I can take care of you, though," I said. It seemed like the proper thing to do.

He just smiled even wider and rolled over so that he could reach the nightstand and grab the lube. As he got himself ready, all I could think was how much I didn't feel up to having sex right now, but I felt obligated, like I had to atone for my brain being unfaithful while I slept. I rolled over onto my belly, mostly so that

I wouldn't need to look him in the eye while we did this. It'd hide my continued lack of an erection, too.

Soon enough, he'd gotten me ready, too, and I just let my face rest flat against my pillow as he crawled atop me, lifted my big, ringed tail out of the way, and worked his way in. The going was a bit tough; Justin was a big guy, and I wasn't exactly in a relaxed and receptive mood, but it was still easier to lie on my stomach and get fucked than it was to try to explain to my boyfriend what was going on.

Once my fox started thrusting into me in earnest, it broke through the haze of my sleepiness, but it also brought memories of my dream to the forefront. I kept my eyes scrunched shut and just concentrated on breathing steadily as I rode it all out. "There's my raccoon," Justin huffed into my ear, and yeah, I was definitely glad he couldn't see the look on my face.

See, the key thing was that I hadn't just been dreaming I'd been fucking someone else. I'd been dreaming about fucking a specific someone else—specifically, my friend Kervin. He was this swishy little cacomistle, gay as anything without being too flaming, pretty without being girly, super-awesome and cute as a button. He was also unique among my friends in that he was the only one that Justin had never met.

Never met, never even heard of. It didn't start out as anything sinister, but after a few months, there was no easy way I could just mention him without Justin getting all indignant and demanding to know, "How come I've never heard of this guy before?" Plus, hey, part of me had a little fun, having a harmless secret of my own to keep from my boyfriend.

Justin began thrusting harder. Getting fucked when I wasn't in the mood for it never felt good, but hopefully he'd be done soon and I could just take a long shower. I didn't usually bemoan the fact that my boyfriend was well hung, but I still wasn't able to relax, and I don't think he was noticing that.

The kicker to it all was that I should have been happy that Justin wanted to have sex at all. Months of barely even getting an attentive paw once a week were what had put me in the mindset of wanting to fuck Kervin in the first place, and now here I was, finally getting some action and being unable to enjoy it because it was so goddamn awkward.

I could feel Justin's rhythm getting less careful, so I started moaning in the hopes that it would turn him on some more and help him finish faster. I couldn't tell if it was helping or not, but I kept it up because I also needed to maintain the illusion that I was enjoying things.

Eventually, he finished, and I'd spaced out so much that I honestly couldn't tell how long it had taken. Still, with Justin collapsed on top of me, I could finally relax and catch my breath, and continue to just lie there until he was ready to let me up.

Justin's tongue licked along the rim of my left ear. "That was good," he whispered to me.

"Yeah," I muttered back. I gave my hips a lazy wiggle, the best I could muster. Justin just chuckled, his muzzle resting atop my head, between my ears.

~

Justin and I were coming up on our two-year anniversary in just under a month. Looking back on it, it was hard to believe it had been that long. Well, in some senses, at least. When I thought about my sex life, those two years felt like ten.

I kept telling myself that I still loved him, and I don't think I was even lying to myself about it. Lately, though, I'd noticed that I was letting myself get more and more frustrated by all the little things. That, and the lack of sex, which I didn't consider "little."

For the first year of our dating, I think that the thrill of "new love" kept both of us blind to some of the more obvious truths about each other. One major thing was that Justin just wasn't as social or outgoing as I was. To his credit, he'd given it his best effort when we were still a new couple, but as the months wore on, so did his fortitude, and more and more often he took to bowing out whenever we'd get invited out to parties or nights out clubbing or what have you. I was disappointed, of course, but not offended, and besides, it's always healthy to have a personal life outside of one's S.O.

Maybe that's part of why I liked keeping Kervin as my little secret. The cacomistle had started coming to Spectrum (the local night-club to which Justin had long since stopped going) a little over half a year ago, and we clicked really well early on. He seemed to like that

there was someone at the club he could hang out with and talk to who wasn't trying to get into his pants.

What didn't dawn on me right away was that, the first few times me and Kervin had hung out, I'd never mentioned that I *had* a boyfriend. I was just keeping things platonic without excuses, and so I decided to run with that, and much like I'd never mentioned Kervin to Justin, I never mentioned Justin to Kervin, either.

I flipped my cell phone open and closed and open and closed as I sat on the couch. It was a Saturday, and I was seriously considering heading on up to Spectrum that night. Justin and I didn't have any definite plans, so hopefully he wouldn't mind if I went out. Besides, he'd already gotten his rocks off inside me just a couple hours before, and given his track record for wanting to have sex on anything resembling a regular basis lately, I didn't figure he'd mind my absence terribly.

"You're going to break that thing."

I looked up to see Justin looming over me, can of soda in paw, with a handsome smile on his face. My petty annoyances with him melted away, and I smiled back, rubbing my eyes as I tucked my phone back into my pocket. "Sorry. Just fidgeting."

"Something on your mind?"

"Just trying to figure out what I want to do tonight."

Justin took a sip from his soda can and set it down before sitting next to me on the couch. "Well, there's that pasta in the pantry," he said. "I was thinking maybe we could cook that." He gave my shoulder a little nuzzle.

"That could work," I said. I leaned my head back and closed my eyes. My mind's eye conjured up the image of Kervin moving sensually across the dance floor. "Hey, are you okay with me maybe going out tonight?"

"You don't want to cook?" I opened my eyes to see his ears tilted back just slightly; if I didn't know Justin so well, I doubt I'd have noticed it.

"No, I mean, after that," I explained. "I just want to get out for a bit, you know? I've spent every night this week at home."

Justin patted me on the thigh and stood back up. "I don't mind. I've got some reading I wanted to catch up on, anyway." His tail tickled my knees as he walked past me.

I pulled my phone back out and set about texting Kervin. I already knew he was going

to be at Spectrum that night; I just wanted to make sure he knew to expect me.

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Justin put together the meat sauce and the vegetables; I just cooked the pasta. He was always better in the kitchen than I was, but together, we made a pretty good team.

Now, though, the aftertaste of that meal was being washed away by hard liquor. Standing over by the bar where I was, the music wasn't so loud that I couldn't still hear myself think, and I needed a few more minutes of clarity to give myself one last chance to figure out just what I was expecting or hoping for here.

Kervin wasn't here yet; I made sure to show up before he did. Part of me wanted to make sure I got a couple of drinks in me first, so that I'd have fewer inhibitions, but the other part of me was chastising myself pretty heavily for thinking that. I mean, it wasn't like I was planning on cheating on my boyfriend, so why did I need to be uninhibited? Truth be told, I wasn't really sure *why* I was there.

I was spared overthinking the situation. Kervin showed up just before I was going to order my second drink. He tapped me on the shoulder from behind, waiting there with a big, bright smile on his muzzle when I turned around to see him.

The cacomistle was one of the few people I knew who was shorter than me and not in grade school. Even so, his big ears and the way he held himself kept him from looking tiny. Maybe the extra-long tail added to his sense of size and mass? Whatever the case, he kept flashing me that sweet smile. "So, what's your poison tonight?"

"That depends," I asked. "What're you drinking?"

"Something gay," he said. "If it's pink or green, it gets the thumbs up from me."

I chuckled. "Duly noted," I said. He wandered over towards the dance floor and I flagged down the bartender for a new round. Settling on green over pink, I waddled on over to where Kervin was waiting and handed him one of the glasses.

"Not dancing yet?" I asked.

"Still waiting to feel the energy," he said. "Music's okay, but the right mood just isn't clicking in my head yet." He took a sip of his

drink and licked his lips in approval. My mind flashed back to the dream I'd had about him.

I don't know why the dream was bothering me so much. It's not like it was the first time I'd had a sexual dream about him—hell, I'd actively fantasized about fooling around with him long before my subconscious ever got in on the action. Did I want to tell him about it this time? That didn't seem like a good idea.

The tip of his long tail flicked against my shin. "You doing all right tonight?" the cacomistle asked.

"Huh? Yeah, of course," I said, feeling how badly my smile was forced. "Why do you ask?"

"Just seems like your mind is elsewhere," he said. "Do you need me to help reel it in for you?"

At once, my elsewhere mind split up and went to all the different things that Kervin's comment could possibly imply. Okay, so most of those were things that he probably wasn't implying and I was just imagining, specifically because I knew I shouldn't be.

I looked down into his eyes, which reflected the rapidly changing dance floor lights, going from green to blue to red to purple and back again in time with the beat. "You ever feel like your life is changing all around you, and you're the only person who isn't noticing?" I asked.

His smile curled up the slightest bit. "I'd say that's all just a part of growing up, but we're supposedly both grown-ups, you and I."

That made me chuckle. "Yeah, I dunno. I guess there's just a lot on my mind lately."

"Oh? Like what?"

I came within an inch of blurting out, "You," but I managed to catch myself. "Just everything, really. Work, home, stuff."

"I hear you," Kervin replied. He gazed out towards the dance floor and took a long sip of green. "Just everything," he repeated quietly. "Yeah. I think I get you. Though I think maybe sometimes I just *wish* things would change faster than they really are."

Something about him standing there, with his eyes just the tiniest bit distant, the fur of his face continuing to change color as the lights switched, made me want to lean down, grab him, and kiss him. I'd often fantasized that he was a great kisser, the kind of guy who goes slow and delicate and tender-like.

I didn't, though. Despite what I might have thought earlier, I wasn't in some rush to cheat

on Justin. "Yeah," I responded in turn. "I think maybe that's how I'm feeling, too."

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Justin was asleep by the time I got home. He'd passed out in bed, his book lying open against his chest, face down.

I picked it up, found his bookmark, and set it down on the nightstand. Then I crawled into bed beside him and let myself drift off.

My hope was that I wouldn't have any more confusing dreams while I slept.

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When I woke up, Justin was all tucked over on his own side of the bed, leaving quite a big gap between us. While this was pretty much the exact opposite of what waking up yesterday had been like, this was what was usual, what had become *de rigueur*.

I slipped out of bed, and the fox did not stir. While taking a shower, I ended up jerking off, getting most of the way hard before I even consciously noticed how worked up I was. With water splashing over my fur, I closed my eyes and made sure that I was imagining getting fucked by no one in particular as I finished myself off and came all over the shower all.

I washed it off, but I knew that Justin, with his vulpine nose, would probably be able to smell it anyway. We'd had our sex for the month yesterday, though, I thought bitterly, and that made me feel vindicated.

As I dried myself off afterwards, I hung my head and sighed. Last night with Kervin I'd convinced myself so adamantly that things were fine, that I wasn't lacking anything in my relationship, even when I knew it was a lie. And I'd behaved myself completely, and what was my reward? My own mind turning on me again, fueling me with feelings of defiance, taking petty pleasure out of denying my boyfriend the sex I knew he wasn't going to have with me anyway.

Downstairs, I found that Justin had woken up and made coffee while I'd been in the shower. He sat on the couch, watching one of his police procedural shows off of the DVR (he followed three or four of them, and I honestly couldn't tell which one this was). I poured myself a mug of coffee, kept it black, and then sat down on the chair next to him.

"Morning," he said, only half-turning to look at me. His nostrils twitched. "You smell nice this morning. Is that the new shampoo we bought?"

"Yeah," I said. I looked over at him, but his attention was fully reabsorbed by the television. The thought occurred to me that I could slip out of the chair, scoot in between his feet, pull his cock out of his boxers and just go to town on him, and he'd probably at least pause the DVR long enough for me to finish, but instead I just pulled out my laptop and made a specific point not to look for porn.

~~~

Tuesday, Justin had to work late, so I took the opportunity to set up dinner with Kervin. He asked who else we might want to invite, and rather than have him get suspicious that I wanted him alone on purpose, I suggested a couple mutual friends who I already knew were busy. Not like the two of us hanging out alone together was weird or anything. Not on its own, at any rate.

Now that we *were* alone, though, I was wishing I'd taken more precautions. Precautions like jerking off before I left the house, in order to minimize the likelihood of me making a bad decision. So what if Justin had a nose that could smell it; it'd be way easier for him to smell the fact that I'd cheated on him if I came back with another guy's musk all over me.

Fuck. Well, at least I'd been smart enough to choose a brew pub for dinner, and not someplace romantic or anything. After ordering drinks and hearing Kervin order a soda, I realized that I'd never actually seen him drink a beer before, which then made me wonder why he hadn't suggested someplace else when I'd brought up hitting up a brew pub.

He seemed in a great mood, though, all smiles and none of that distant wistfulness he'd shown the other night. "I totally need to save room for the bread pudding for dessert," he pointed out as he scanned the menu.

I thought back to when Justin and I had just started dating. He'd always want to share desserts, thinking it was cute and romantic, and while I agreed, I was secretly resentful because I wanted to be able to have a whole dessert to myself. I lost a decent amount of weight back then, though, so it wasn't all bad.

Kervin, though, didn't seem to have a wasted ounce of fat on his whole body, near as I could tell, which made me realize just how familiar I was with his body, at least by sight. I could try to excuse that by saying that it just came part and parcel from watching someone out on the dance floor week after week, but no. Let him have his bread pudding, then, if it made him smile; he could afford it.

Dinner was a while in coming, but it gave Kervin and I a chance to talk and catch up on the events of the rest of the weekend. Whenever I went out to dinner with Justin, he would spend most of the wait in silence, with his eyes fixed on his phone as he either texted people or read blogs or whatever. Kervin was too naturally chatty for that, or maybe he just cared more.

"Thanks for inviting me out tonight, by the way," he said just after the waiter had finally brought our plates by. "I needed an excuse to get out of the house."

"Everything okay at home?"

The cacomistle nodded as he took a big bite out of his huge sandwich. "Mmhmm," he muttered in reply as he swallowed. "Just looking to be a long week, and I'd like to unwind while I can."

I was feeling bold. "You know, I wouldn't mind helping you unwind. If you really needed it."

A brief glimmer appeared in the corner of his eye as he looked back at me. "Hey, just getting to leave the house is help enough," he said, but I could tell from his expression that he'd caught my real meaning.

Would I push it? I knew I probably could and still have breathing room to back off before he got offended. It was really more a question of whether my courage would hold out that long. "I really like spending time with you," I said. "You know that."

Kervin was too far away for me to see whether or not he was blushing, and my nose wasn't sensitive enough to pick up any other change in his demeanor. "You're a good guy," he said. "And hey, we're both ringtails of a sort, right? So we gotta stick together." He winked and chuckled, and the sound of it nearly melted me.

It turned out that I wasn't bold enough to tell him just how much I wanted the two of us to stick together.

After dinner and a serving of bread pudding each had been finished, Kervin and I went to say our goodbyes in the parking lot. Justin would probably be home before too long, and while he wouldn't be mad if I wasn't, it'd be weird for me to stay out all night on a Tuesday.

"So, yeah, if it's going to be a long wait, just let me know when you might be free to hang out again," I said.

Kervin sighed quietly. "Yeah. I'll have to see what my schedule is like," he said. "Hopefully things won't be too weird."

"Hopefully." I went to give him a little goodbye hug, but after giving his slender body a little squeeze, I held on.

He let out a soft, quiet breath, and while I might not be a fox, even my ears could catch it. I looked down at him, and he looked up at me.

The moment lingered. Neither of us said anything, and neither of us moved closer, but neither of us pulled away, either. I was so painfully aware of my every breath, of every beat of my heart. I didn't want to hug too hard; I didn't want to breathe so heavily; I didn't want to tilt my ears the wrong direction.

Realizing that I was overthinking everything, I leaned in and kissed him.

He kissed back, which actually kind of surprised me. I don't think anyone was around to see us, but I didn't really care, either. Here we were, actually kissing, and in the moment, I felt no guilt whatsoever about it.

Kervin was a clumsier kisser than I'd fantasized, but in a cute way, like he hadn't kissed a lot of guys. And he certainly wasn't bad at it. My fingers squeezed at his hips, and I got an adorable squeak from him for my efforts.

We pulled away from each other at the same time, slowly, and it made me smile to know that we were so in sync. Now I could tell that he was blushing, and that made me want to kiss him all over again. I held back, though.

"So," I said, voice breaking on that one syllable, which made Kervin smile. "I'll get in touch with you later in the week?"

The cacomistle nodded, his long tail unable to keep still. "Yeah," he said. "I'll let you know when I can finagle some free time."



my decision. In others, he cried and begged and sometimes I took him back and sometimes I put my foot down and told him that it just wasn't working out.

In none of these scenarios did I mention that I had found someone else.

Kervin hadn't called or texted or emailed, and I was reluctant to do the same. I wanted to see him again, in part because I wanted to see if we would end up kissing again, and in part because I wanted to set the record straight and tell him that, no, I already had a boyfriend and that I was sorry but we just couldn't do this.

Still, Kervin and I had that chemistry that Justin and I were lacking—that connection that I so desperately craved. Couldn't Justin feel it, too? Was he happy with how things were going? Did he fantasize about other guys, too?

That night, I greeted Justin at the door with a kiss. It was just a tiny peck, though, as I didn't

On Wednesday night, I tried to initiate sex with Justin as a means of making an apology for a transgression he didn't know I'd committed. He'd claimed tiredness, though: a long day at work that had just ended and another long day coming up, and so we didn't do anything. I tried to at least snuggle up to him as he slept, but given his tossing and turning, I could tell it was making him uncomfortable and interfering with his rest, so I backed off.

Thursday at work, I was lost in a total haze. I kept wondering what the kiss with Kervin meant. I kept thinking about Justin and how I wasn't sure if his being so distant was a good thing or a bad thing for the both of us.

My mind constructed elaborate scenarios of me breaking up with Justin over an obvious lack of chemistry. In some of them, the fox was very blasé, taking the whole thing in stride. In others, he solemnly accepted it but respected

want to risk insinuating that I was up for something more so soon after he'd gotten in from work (and maybe part of me was irrationally afraid that he'd still taste cacomistle on my lips two days after the fact).

Knowing how tired my fox was, I let him off the hook and ordered take-out so that he didn't have to cook—or feel obligated to help me do so. As we ate, I looked at him, staring while trying to make it look like I wasn't.

Confusion welled up within me. Here in Justin's presence, enjoying a nice simple meal with him, I thought about the past two years of our life together. I'd be stupid to give that up. This was our home, and there was so much in our daily lives that I was probably taking for granted now that I'd miss terribly the moment it was gone. Besides, what would our friends think?

I could tell from the fox's body language that he'd once again had a tiring day. Too tired to just receive a blowjob? Knowing him, probably. God, I didn't even know how to approach him anymore. Would I just have to cross my fingers and hope that, on any given weekend morning, I might get woken up by his muzzle on my dick again?

My fork wobbled in between my fingers. "Hey," I said, and Justin's ears perked up like I'd just snapped him out of a trance.

"Yeah?" he asked.

"So, um, do you..." My words trailed off. There were so many different ways I wanted to try to end that sentence, and it was like my varying options had caused a pileup that was keeping any of them from getting out.

"Do you still find me attractive?"

Oh, God, I can see how offended he'd be just from my even asking that. *"Do you want to have sex?"* No, I doubt that he would, and I'd feel like an idiot for asking so bluntly.

"Do you think we'd be able to pull off an open relationship?"

That was it, right there: my simplest solution, my way to have my cake and eat it too. And maybe in my wildest fantasies, I'd be able to say that randomly in the middle of dinner and not create the most colossal shitstorm ever.

"Do I what?"

I shook my head. "Sorry. Brain-fart." I forced a smile. "Do you have anything going on after work tomorrow?"

Justin flicked his ears and sighed. "Depends on how late I have to work," he said, turning his

attention more towards his food than towards me. "Maybe we can see who all is around that wants to do sushi?"

I barely mustered a smile. "That sounds good."

~*~

At three o'clock the next afternoon, I confirmed with Justin—to no real surprise—that he'd be working late again. With that out of the way, I decided I'd be hitting up Spectrum that night.

I didn't get in touch with Kervin, but I knew he'd be there. He was pretty much always there on Friday nights, and if his week was as weird and stressful as he'd implied right before we kissed the other night, he'd probably be there early. Plus, if I didn't go out of my way to make sure he was going to be there, it would help avoid any weirdness if it turned out that he'd been intentionally avoiding me all week.

Sure enough, the cacomistle was already there when I arrived, and it definitely didn't seem like he'd been keeping his distance on purpose. He practically bounced as he trotted over to me. We greeted with a warm hug, and there was a split-second where I think we were both considering kissing again, but instead we just nuzzled.

"God, I am so glad it's the weekend," he said as he pulled away, shimmying his way towards the bar, letting me follow. "I fully plan to stay out as late as my body will let me."

I chuckled. "In that case, maybe let's try not to get trashed right out the gate."

"Nah, we should start with the hard shit now," he said. "That way we can be drunk and enjoy ourselves and then still be sober enough to drag ourselves home in the wee hours."

I bit my lip. I knew I couldn't drag him home, but the thought was still more than a little appealing. But hey, if nothing else, I wasn't going to argue with his drinking philosophy. I think I needed a good, solid buzz tonight as much as he did.

Plus, the drunker he got, and the drunker I got, the greater the chances of our having a nice, long makeout session. That wasn't too much to hope, was it?

Kervin didn't take too long to find that right "energy" he needed to get out on the dance floor and start moving. He was good at dancing without spilling his drink, which was a skill!

didn't share—not without just quickly guzzling down half the glass first.

I'm not sure which of us started it, but after a few more drinks apiece, we were definitely dancing closer to each other than we usually did. I know that he made eyes at me, first, before I made eyes back at him. That led to us dancing closer, then a little closer still until we were right up against each other without grinding.

Neither of us was going to let things go on for much longer before that started happening, though. I set my paws on his shoulders and he set his paws on my hips. We synchronized our rhythms and brought our muzzles so close that our whiskers were brushing against each other's. No kissing—not yet—but the look in the cacomistle's eyes told me that that was only a matter of time, too.

I held off, though. I wanted him to do it. I wanted to know *he* wanted it. I wanted him to initiate it so that it wouldn't be *my* fault that I was cheating on my boyfriend. I wanted—

As if reading my mind, Kervin leaned up onto tiptoe and pressed his lips to mine. This wasn't the tender little kiss we'd shared in the parking lot—this was deep, lustful, and sloppy, both of us groaning, the sound drowned out by the music but the buzzing in our throats reverberating through each other's muzzles.

I was going to fuck him tonight. Somehow I'd make it happen. And that *would* be my fault.

Despite having had a few drinks, I could no longer feel the effects of alcohol in my system. I was completely lucid, and completely fixated. My paws groped and grabbed at Kervin's ass, and he arched up against me, squeaking and gasping and digging the ridge in his shorts into my hip. His long, banded tail twisted and flowed behind him as I tucked my muzzle in against the side of his neck and just pressed myself right back against him, feeling him, smelling him, holding him.

My mind raced as I tried to think of all the places the two of us could conceivably go to be alone. Spectrum's bathroom was kind of dingy, though we wouldn't have been the first two guys to fuck in there, that's for sure. I liked Kervin too much to just drag him out into the back alley, though I wouldn't discount that option if all others fell through. Taking him to a motel would make him suspicious. There was the back room that bands and DJs used to store their stuff, but I doubted we'd be quick enough

(or quiet enough) to not get caught and barred from the club for life.

I was about to just settle on the alley when what should have been the most obvious solution came to mind. "Can we go back to your place?" I asked.

The cacomistle folded his ears back. "Not if we want any privacy." He pressed in against my hip again, as if to show that he wasn't giving up on things. Moments passed, long and awkward, but then he nuzzled at my chin and said, "Here, follow me."

And so follow I did, trying to will my erection down as we walked past the other clubgoers. If anyone noticed, though, nobody shot us any significant looks, which was good enough for me. The moment we stepped outside, I was surprised by how cold it was, but that might well have been just because I was feeling so warm and flushed.

Kervin led me to his car, a subcompact hatchback that he'd driven me home in this one time I'd had way too much to drink. I started to head around to the passenger's side, but Kervin instead went to the back and opened up the rear door.

"You're kidding me," I said.

The cacomistle looked nervous. "Well, I mean, do you have any better ideas?"

I thought again about the bathroom and the alley. "Not really."

"So get in."

I did, and Kervin crawled in alongside me. He pushed the rear seats down so that we could at least lie down alongside each other; it was a tight fit, but it was still a fit. Once he closed the door behind him, I could already tell that it was going to get stuffy in there real quick.

We fumbled and groped at each other, one of my arms pinned underneath me, rapidly going numb. I didn't pay it much mind, though. Our muzzles locked again, and then the heat of the moment was all that mattered. I tried to keep myself from thinking about Justin, but I failed; rather than let it dissuade me, though, I used it to bolster my determination. *If you still loved me, I wouldn't have to do this.*

Bit by bit, Kervin took my paws' subtle suggestions for him to move and shift around so that he was beneath me, on his belly. Cramped though it was in the back of his little hatchback, it was also kind of hot—I almost felt like some naughty high-schooler again, except that I'd never picked up a cute guy at a gay club back then.



Unfastening the cacomistle's belt and shorts was tricky, but he helped me with it. I pulled his shorts down to his knees, and then took my time to admire his rump, my fingers trailing over the soft fur and teasing at the root of his long tail. He sighed and shivered as I touched him, and I tried my best to keep my attentions up as I got my own pants open.

I lowered myself on top of him, letting my shaft press in between the crease in the middle of his backside, the drizzle from my tip pooling up, seeping into him. Without lube handy, this was our best bet. I could feel his torso shudder with his deep breathing as he willed himself to relax, and I was willing to give him the time now that I was finally here.

After he gave his hips a suggestive wriggle, I went ahead and started to poke and nudge. It took some doing, but eventually I got my leaky tip inside him, prompting a sharp gasp from him.

His head lifted back as he took a deep breath, and his ears folded the rest of the way back against his skull. The smell of the both of us was rich and heavy in the cramped space we occupied, the lack of circulation adding to the effect. I heard Kervin smack his lips dryly a few times, and then he squeaked out, "Stop, stop."

I quickly pulled out. "Sorry. Am I hurting you?"

"No, I..." He let his head back down, his cheek resting on the back of the laid-back seat. I could only see one of his eyes, which was wide open and fixed on nothing in particular. "Look, I can't do this. I really, really like you, and I thought I could, but I can't."

"Why not?" I was too legitimately concerned and confused to sound upset. "Is something—" "I have a boyfriend."

I took a moment to let those words sink in. My cock was still hard, still pressed against the cacomistle's fuzzy backside, and my heart was still pounding with excitement. I looked down

into his face, and I felt a strange urge to lean down and kiss him on the cheek, but I didn't.

"I'm sorry," he started. "I should have said something way earlier, but I—"

"I have a boyfriend, too," I interrupted.

Kervin was silent for several seconds, no doubt just as stunned as I had been just moments before. All I could hear was his panting. If anything was going on outside this little car, there was no sign of it. The cacomistle swallowed, and I could see his throat pulse.

"Does he let you fool around with other guys?" he asked.

"No."

Again, he was quiet. "Mine neither," he eventually said.

I wasn't sure whether to laugh or kick myself or apologize or console him or what. In all my weird worrying and fretting and fantasizing, this was one eventuality I'd never planned for. I didn't know if I felt guilty about Justin or bad for Kervin or if I felt just plain stupid for myself.

"Okay, let's make a deal," Kervin muttered, his eyes closed. "One time."

"What?"

"We do this, just this one time," he explained. "And then never again."

Now the inside of my mouth was dry. This was my window to back out, to preserve my honor *and* his, to know that we'd both wanted it but were both smart enough not to go through with it in the end.

"One time," I agreed instead, and then I started to push my way back in.

He moaned, the sound soft and sultry and as delightful as anything I'd ever heard. My forearms tucked in against his sides, my paws on his shoulders as I lowered myself down, slowly working my hips down, one snug inch at a time. Once I was all the way inside, I kissed the back of one of his big ears, and he tilted his head back to nuzzle weakly against me.

There wasn't a lot of room to move, no space for any fancy maneuvering—it was just simple fucking, my hips rising and falling, his body only barely able to shift beneath me. The musky smell in the air got stronger by the second, and the windows had fogged up so much that there was no doubt what could be going on inside.

Kervin's panting was quiet, but also rough and squeaky. I could hear the tiny little hitches in it whenever I'd thrust down, and sometimes

he'd even miss a whole beat, his muzzle just hanging open with a brief, unmistakable expression of shameless lust. He was so pliant, so willing, and all I wanted to do in that moment was provide for him. The air was dank, the tiny hatchback was uncomfortable, but Kervin was beautiful, my own labored breathing making the fur on the back of his head and neck rise and fall.

There was no point in trying to prolong things. We were both in this for the same thing, and the longer it took, the more our strained bodies were going to regret it. I didn't have energy or patience, moreover, I didn't want to give Kervin the chance to try to call it off again. Not that I thought he would; each of my short, punctuated thrusts seemed to bring him only pleasure, and despite the effort it must have taken him, he was doing his best to lift his rear up to meet my hips as I stuffed myself into him.

I nipped and tugged at the back of his neck a few times, but he didn't seem to like that, so I stopped. Licks and kisses to his ears got far better responses in the form of plaintive whimpers that were so quiet they barely rose above the sound of my hips smacking into his ass. I gripped his shoulders harder, I slammed my weight down faster, and I kept it up until all conscious control left me and I was stuck on autopilot.

It was mere seconds later that I was burying my face in between the cacomistle's shoulder blades, my whole body pinning him to the scratchy bed of the car as I came inside him. I gasped and gasped, scrunching my eyes shut, my nose drinking in his scent until I was dizzy with the onrush of afterglow.

With my body's needs sated, the fog over my mind receded, and I felt an acidic churning in my gut. There was no way for me to undo this—that was my first clear, conscious thought. My heart was still fluttering as my body came down from its lingering orgasmic high, and I honestly had no idea what I was supposed to do after I got out of this car.

Pulling out from under Kervin's tail, I lifted myself up and gave him room to roll over onto his back. My paw found its way between his legs and wrapped itself around his hard and sticky cock, but since I'd already gotten off and was feeling so guilt-ridden and confused, my attentions were mechanical, unfeeling, rote. It didn't seem to matter, though; within a couple

minutes, Kervin had gotten off, spurting all over his belly and chest, making a mess of the shirt we hadn't had time to pull off.

We lay there for a few minutes longer in total silence, left only with those fogged-up windows and the fetid stench of musk that refused to go away.

"I'm serious," Kervin murmured. "We can't do this again."

~~~

I took a long, hot shower as soon as I got home, making sure to shampoo myself twice.

There was no oral sex wakeup for me in the morning, but Justin at least had coffee ready for me again.

~~~

On Tuesday, Justin actually got off of work early. As my little surprise for him, I had dinner nearly finished when he came in the door.

"Well, doesn't this smell lovely?" he asked as he leaned in, kissed me, and then headed to the bedroom to get changed out of his work clothes.

He was pretty chatty while we ate. Mostly, I think he was just in a good mood because his bosses were finally giving him a break, but it was nice to see him perky and smiling for once. That, and he even finished his whole plate, which he almost never did when I was the only one who cooked.

Once dinner was done and Justin was finished doing the dishes, I slipped up beside him and took one of his paws in my own. "Do you want to come lie down with me for a bit?" I asked.

He looked into my eyes and then turned his gaze over towards the living room. "I was kind of hoping to get caught up on some of my TV from last week," he said.

I made myself smile, and then nodded. "Okay."

He squeezed my paw. "Are you mad?"

"No," I said. "It's okay. I'll just finish cleaning up the kitchen."

He walked off, and I braced my paws on the edge of the sink. I waited until I heard the DVR come on, and then I sighed to myself. Maybe having someone to come home and eat dinner with you every day wasn't so bad, for what it was, if that's all you had.

I pulled out my phone and texted Kervin, asking if he was going to be free at all this week.

He was quick to respond: "*Work is kind of crazy right now.*"

Twenty minutes later, I was on my laptop in the living room, mostly tuning out Justin's cop drama. My phone buzzed again, and I pulled it out to see another text from Kervin.

"Things won't be weird forever."

I looked over at Justin, his eyes blankly reflecting the flicker of the television, and I knew that Kervin didn't really believe that any more than I did.



ONE IS SILVER

by Keto and Kashra



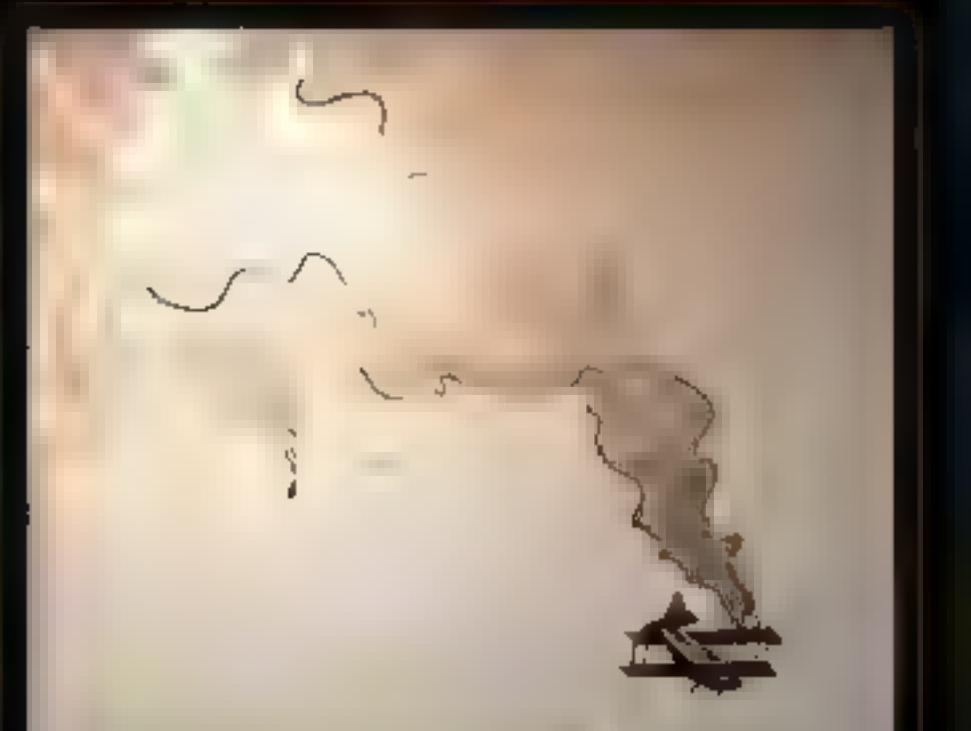
THERE WAS A
GOLDEN AGE, ONCE
WHERE WE WOULD SCREAM
THROUGH THE HEAVENS LIKE..



...VALKYRIES, WINGS GLEAMING IN
THE PRISTINE SUN, OUR APPROACH
HERALDED BY THE HOWLING WIND...



...AND THE FIRE OF OUR WEAPONS.



WE WERE THE GREATEST OF WARRIORS—
ENTERING OUR BATTLES KNOWING THAT
WE WOULD EITHER RETURN VICTORIOUS...

...OR NOT RETURN AT ALL.



IT WAS A SIMPLER PLACE THAN THE WORLD BELOW. IN THE AIR, THERE WAS NO ROOM FOR AMBIVALENCE, NO ROOM FOR DIPLOMACY. IN THE AIR, THERE WERE ONLY ENEMIES.



...AND ALLIES, AND IT DIDN'T TAKE A PAINTING ON OUR WINGS FOR US TO KNOW WHICH WAS WHICH.



YOU TRUSTED YOUR FRIENDS WITH YOUR LIFE

IF YOU SURVIVED THE GREAT WAR, IT WAS AS MUCH THEIR CREDIT AS YOURS.



OF COURSE, WE DID SURVIVE. WE RETURNED TO OUR HOMES AMIDST CHEERS AND MORE AWARDS THAN WE COULD PIN TO OUR VESTS, BUT ALL OF THAT WAS TERRESTRIAL. MUNDANE.

WE SHARED SOMETHING THAT TRANSCENDED MORTAL EXPERIENCE, FLYING TOGETHER. SOMETHING THAT TIED US STRONGER THAN OUR LOVE FOR OUR NATION.



BACK THEN, I WAS CERTAIN IT WAS SOMETHING THAT NEITHER TIME, NOR DISTANCE COULD FADE. AS EACH OF US, INDIVIDUALLY, FOUGHT OUR WAY BACK INTO THE CULTURE OF A WORLD THAT HAD MOVED ON, A WORLD THAT NO LONGER NEEDED PILOTS (AT LEAST NOT THE KIND THAT COULD WORK A BIPLANE), WE CLUNG TO THOSE MEMORIES AS THE ONLY THINGS THAT MADE US REAL.

BUT EVENTUALLY, AFTER ENOUGH YEARS,



AND ENOUGH DISTANCE, LETTERS THAT WERE ONCE WEEKLY TURNED MONTHLY, AND FRIENDS WHO WOULD ONCE HAVE DIED FOR EACH OTHER BECAME PHOTOGRAPHS AND STORIES. NOT THAT ANYONE FORGOT, MIND YOU, BUT MOST OF US EVENTUALLY REALIZED THAT OUR TIME HAD PASSED. AND THOUGH, SECRETLY, WE ALL HOPED FOR IT TO RETURN, FOR ANOTHER CONFLICT TO CALL US BACK TO OUR PLANES, A PILOT WAS NOTHING IF NOT A REALIST. WE HAD DONE A GOOD ENOUGH JOB THE FIRST TIME THAT THE IDEA OF A SECOND WAR WAS

HEY! ISN'T THAT PREYFAR?





YEAH, THEY'VE GOT HIM
DONE UP LIKE SOME KIND OF
BANDIT IN THE PAPER

THE SAHARAN

DIDN'T YOU TWO
FLY TOGETH-

THIS IS CHARACTER
ASSASSINATION!



I'M SURE IT'S JUST A
MISUNDERSTANDING



HMPH



Train Bandits or Air Pirates?

DAKAR — A cargo and passenger train headed from Dakar to Bamako was hijacked Tuesday by a group of what authorities here dubbed "air pirates." The latest in a series of high-profile attacks, the bandits stripped the passengers of valuables and set fire to most of the cargo, before escaping.

The most extraordinary feature of the attack was that it took place while the train was in motion. Using salvaged war planes to distract the passenger compartment, bandits were able to board an old steam locomotive despite its stunning lack of defenses.

But authoritatively issued statistics assuring both passengers and shipyards that the only difference the safety of the railroads is insured by the National Railways.

WELL, AT LEAST
THEY GOT A GOOD
PICTURE OF HIM

SOMETIMES PEOPLE CHANGE, RADJIN. YOU'RE NOT THE
SAME WOLF YOU WERE BACK THEN, EITHER.
YOU KNOW?

NO, VASON.

I DONT KNOW.

PEOPLE DON'T CHANGE,
THE WORLD DOES.

AND IT HASN'T BEEN KIND TO
ANY OF US, STICKING US OUT

IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS
GOD-FORSAKEN DESERT



BITCHING ABOUT THE DESERT! THAT'S A DRINK!



OUT HERE, YOU DIDN'T NEED AN EXCUSE FOR DRINKING. I DIDN'T, ANYWAY

BESIDES, YOU *CHOSE* TO COME OUT HERE, REMEMBER?

COME ON, I DON'T THINK THE PUP'S HEARD THIS ONE.

DON'T REMIND ME.

I'M NOT A PUP!

NO.

ALRIGHT THEN, I'LL TELL HIM.

NO YOU WON'T. KETO DOESN'T NEED TO HEAR *EVERYTHING*.

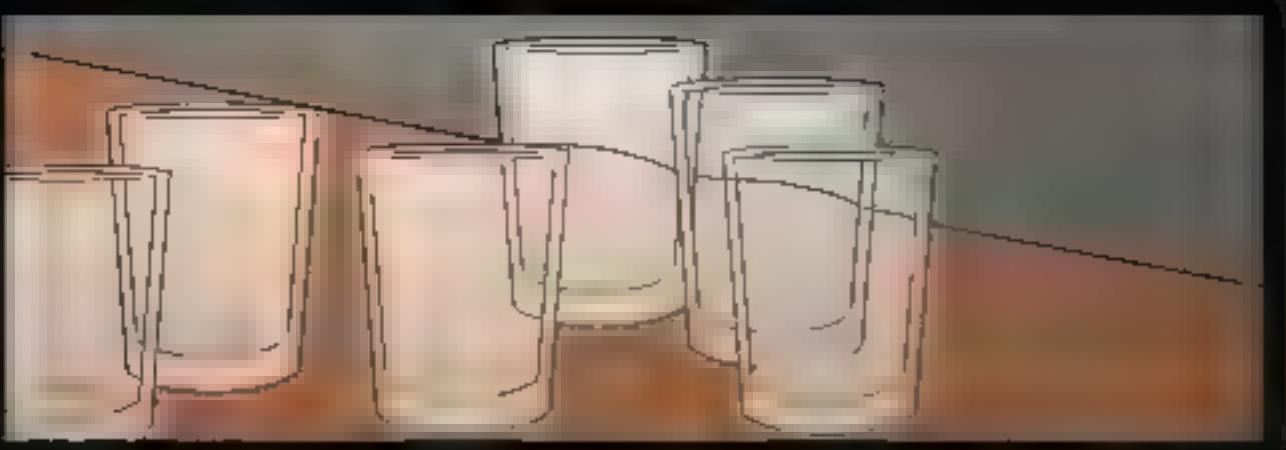
SURE HE DOES. LISTEN UP! RADJIN HERE HAD A NICE, COZY DESK JOB IN THE STATES. AFTER THE WAR, ALL THE FLYBOYS DID. BUT HE JUST COULDN'T KEEP HIS PAWS ON THE GROUND. THE WHOLE THING LASTED ALL OF THREE WEEKS BEFORE HE GOT CANNED.

I QUIT. YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO PISS ME OFF, AREN'T YOU?

HE MADE SOME OFF-COLOR REMARKS ABOUT WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE, WISH I WAS THERE TO HEAR IT. BUT ANYWAY, OFF HE WENT, HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD TO AFRICA, OF ALL PLACES. PICKED UP A JOB PAYING A TENTH AS MUCH AND HE BITCHES LIKE IT'S THE WORLD'S FAULT FOR STICKING HIM HERE.

BUT...WHY?

FLYING CARGO CAN'T BE THAT IMPORTANT TO YOU...



I SHOULD GET BACK
TO THE HANGAR.

YEAH, LIFE WAS DIFFERENT NOW. PREYFAR WAS JUST A NAME IN THE PAPER, WHEN IT CAME DOWN TO IT. I DIDN'T KNOW WHY I WAS SO UPSET. WE ALL DID WHAT WE HAD TO DO, TO GET BY.



I'D GONE AND FOUND SOMETHING
THAT MADE ME HAPPY.

SOMEONE.
MAYBE THAT WAS ENOUGH FOR ME.

STILL, SOMETIMES I NEEDED A REMINDER

I GUESS IT'S NO SURPRISE THAT HE HAPPENED TO LOVE PLANES, TOO.
JUST...NOT THE SAME WAY I DID. CAN'T SAY I'D COMPLAIN THOUGH
GIVE KASHRA ENOUGH TIME WITH A SHEET OF SCRAP METAL AND HE'D MAKE
IT FLY. AND YOU CAN GUESS WHO'D BE PILOTING HIS LATEST EXPERIMENT.



I DON'T FEEL LIKE TALKING ABOUT IT



CHRIST ON
THE CROSS,
WOLF! I'M
TRYING TO
WORK HERE!



YOU'RE
ALWAYS
WORKING

AND I DON'T WANT TO FORGET
WHY I'M OUT HERE...



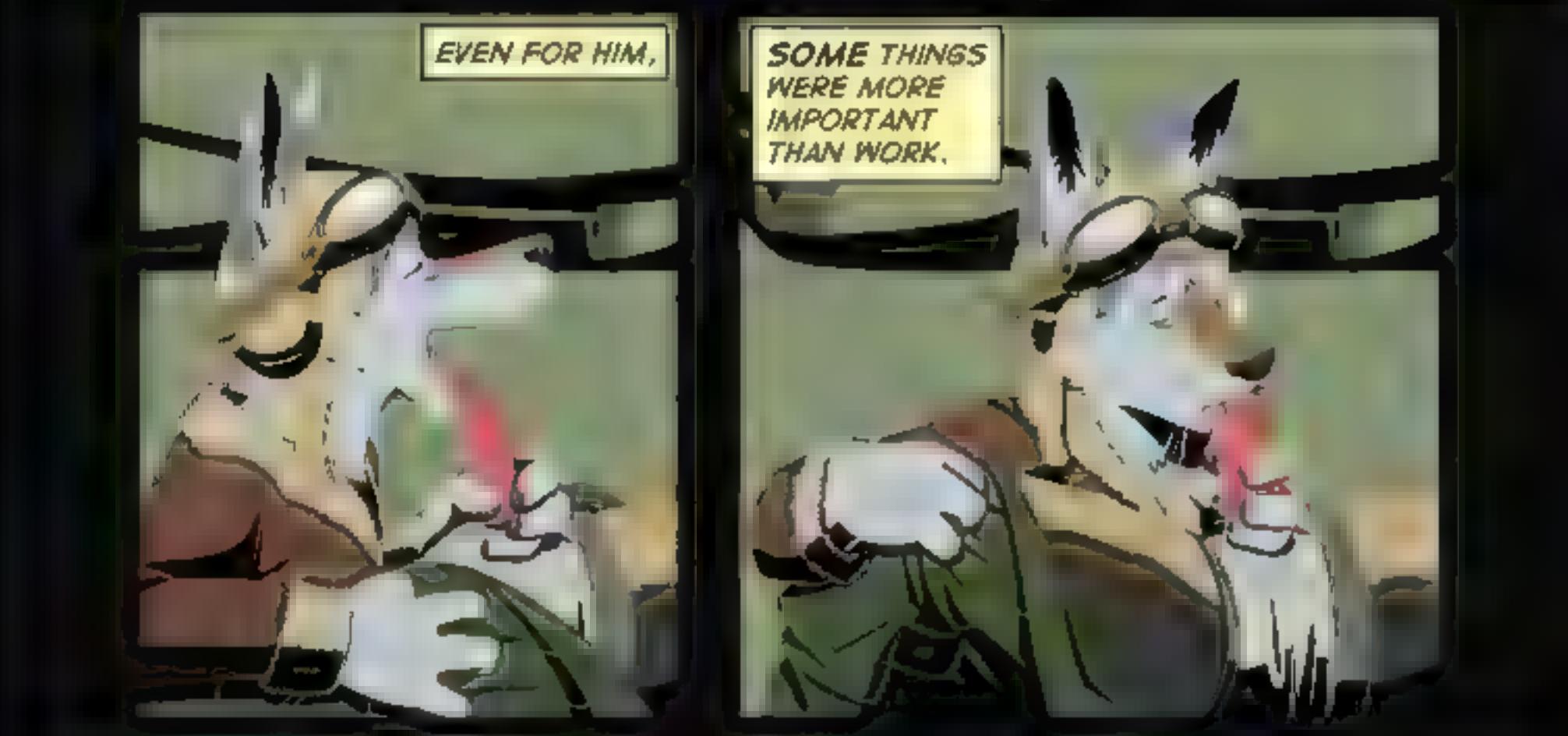
SO SHUT UP AND LET ME HAVE SOME FUN

IT WASN'T HARD TO GET HIM TO SHUT UP...



EVEN FOR HIM,

SOME THINGS
WERE MORE
IMPORTANT
THAN WORK.



I WAS JUST WARMING UP, THOUGH





DON'T TELL ME YOU
CAN'T HANDLE IT, BOSS.

I CAN HANDLE IT,
JUST FINE



I JUST THOUGHT YOU
MIGHT HAVE FORGOTTEN.



WELL IT'S A PRETTY
NARROW AIRSTRIPE, BUT
I'VE LANDED WORSE
THAT'S WHAT YOU PAY
ME FOR, AIN'T IT?



HOW TO
PILOT THAT
THING.

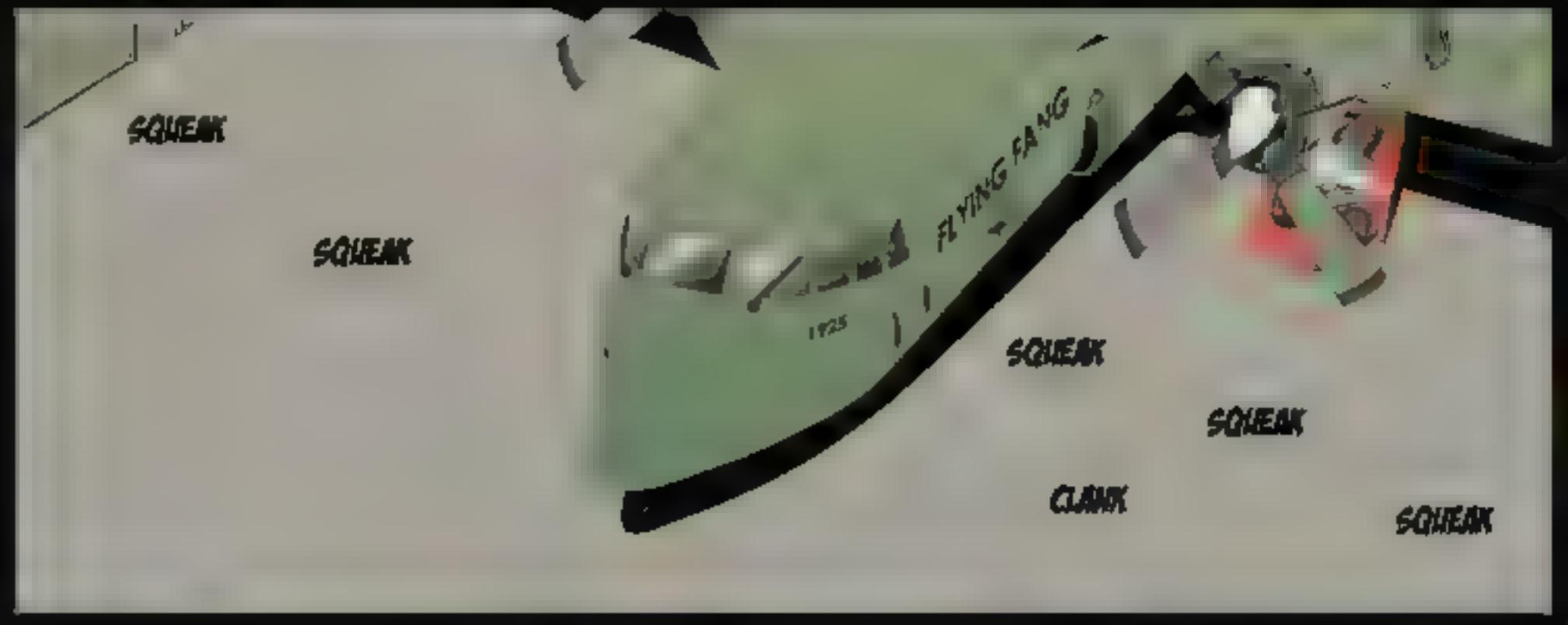


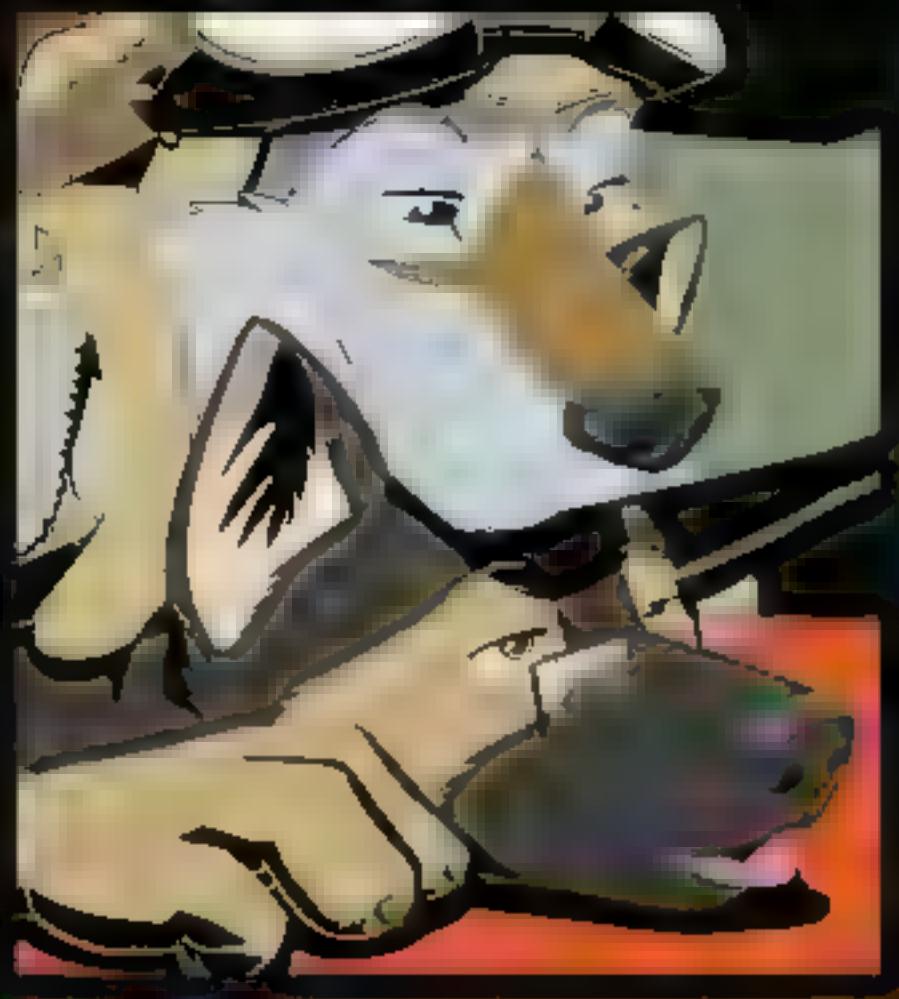
SINCE YOU'RE THE ONE ABOUT
TO GET ON ALL FOURS



THAT SO?

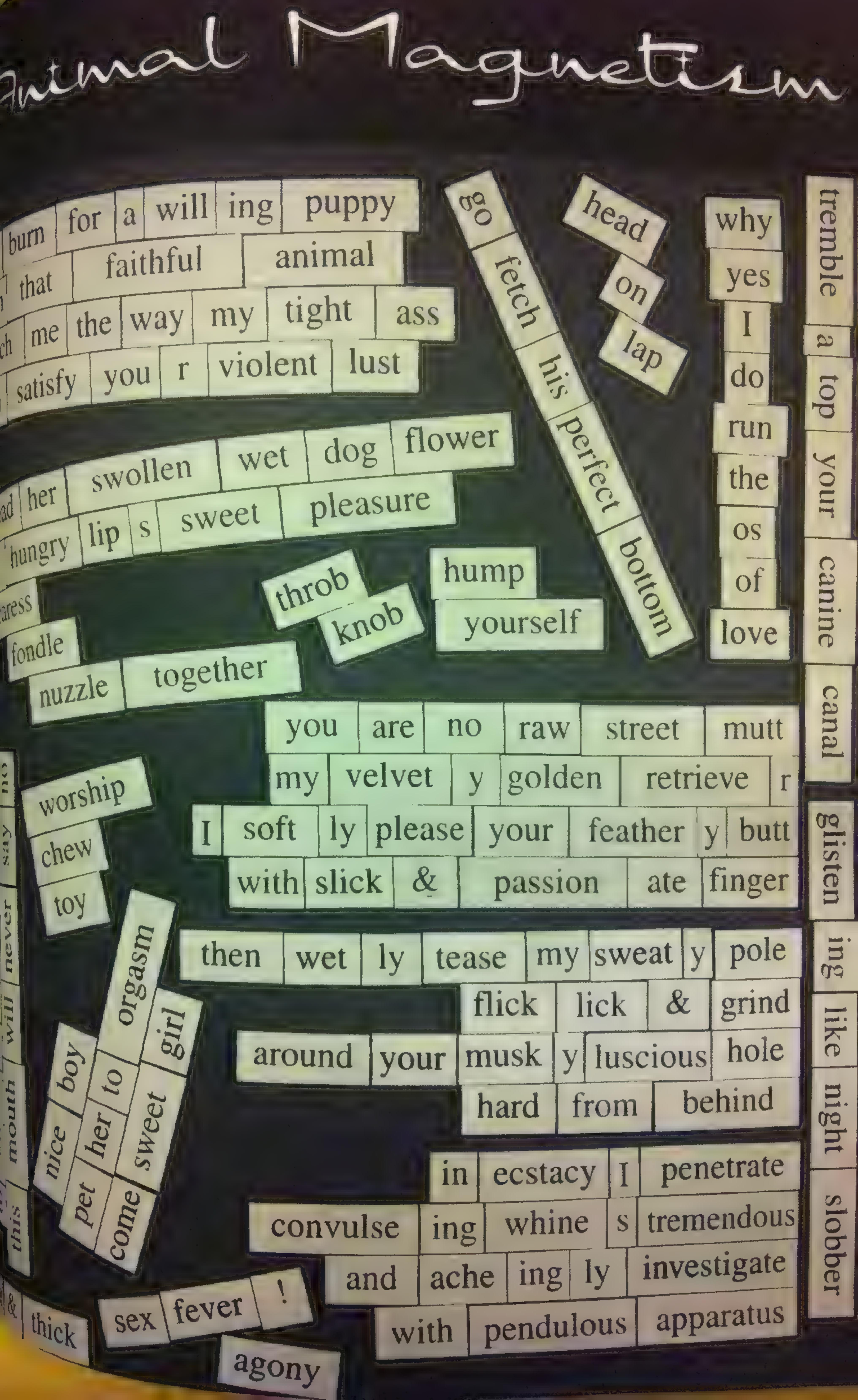






CRASH





by Kyell Gold

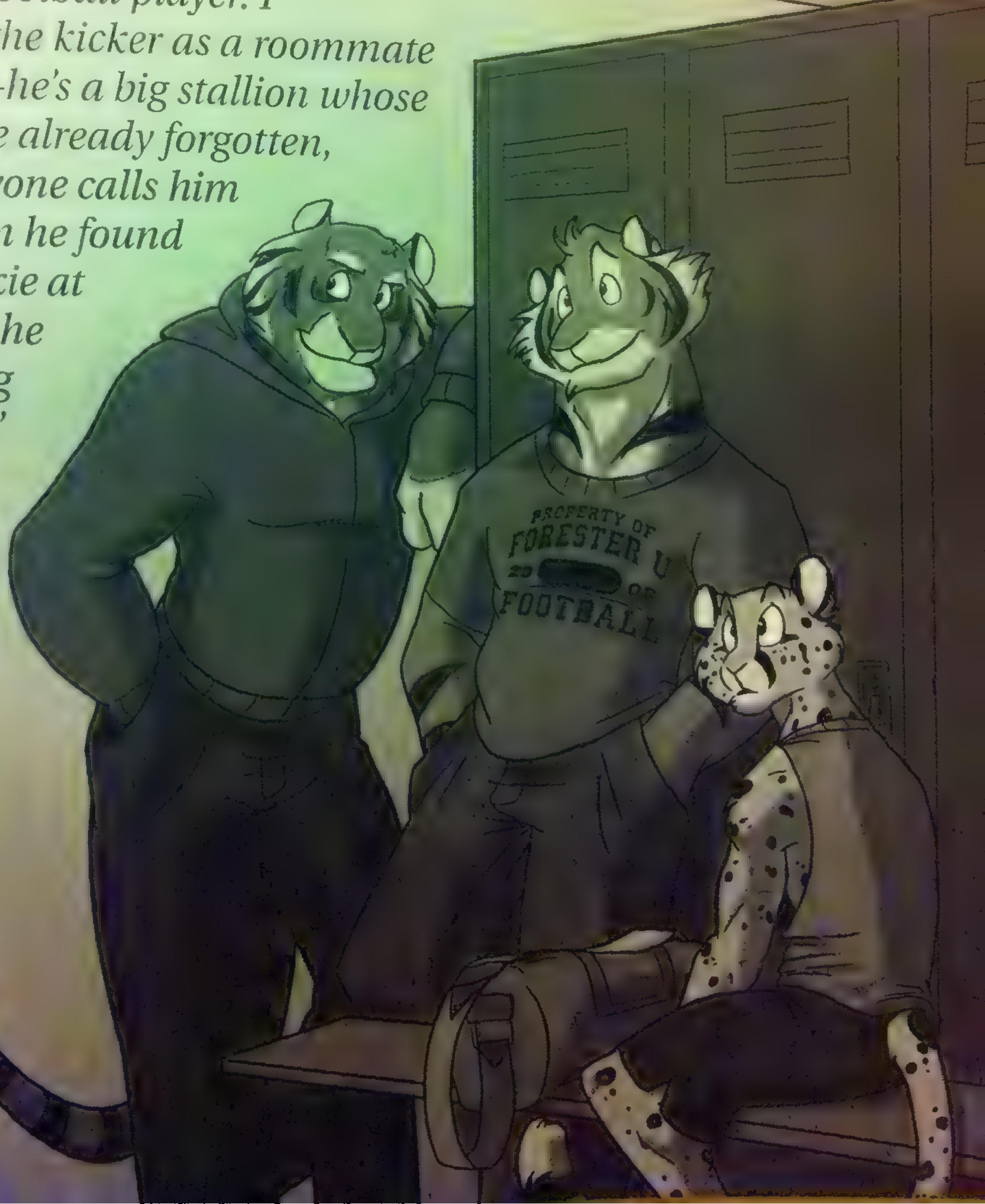
illustrated by AmonOmega



THE WALLET STORY

Ah,
*the life of a
professional football player. I
got assigned the kicker as a roommate
on the road—he's a big stallion whose
real name I've already forgotten,
because everyone calls him
Charm. When he found
out I'm a rookie at
the age of 23, he
started calling
me "Gramps,"
because he's
been in the
league two
years and
he's only 21.*

*Seems like
a fun guy,
though.*





I started the week as a third-string cornerback for the Hilltown Dragons. Four days ago, I got traded to the Chevali Firebirds. Ah, the life of a professional football player. I got assigned the kicker as a roommate on the road—he's a big stallion whose real name I've already forgotten, because everyone calls him Charm. When he found out I'm a rookie at the age of 23, he started calling me "Gramps," because he's been in the league two years and he's only 21. Seems like a fun guy, though.

It's weird being on a new team, because all the guys have their own cliques already. You can latch on with the guys you play with—in my case, the defense—but even though you practice with them, you don't automatically get to hang out afterward. Not that I had many great friends in Hilltown, either. The Dragons were 2-8 when I left, and that kind of losing atmosphere makes it tough to enjoy yourself.

The Firebirds are 3-7 when I arrive, which isn't too much different. The first game I'm there for is a home game, which we lose. We're going on the road for next week's game. I'm expecting the same kind of black funk that was in the Dragons' locker room, but this team seems more upbeat, nobody more than Charm. He takes me over before the game and introduces

me to the only tiger starting for the team, Fisher Kingston. Well, hell, what football-loving tiger doesn't know Fisher Kingston? He seems like a real down-to-earth guy. He sure doesn't wear his two championship rings around. I wonder if he'd let me see them.

The only other guy I talk to much is Jeff Cameron, a cheetah who came over with me in the trade. Like me, he plays defense; unlike me, he starts. He's got a big attitude issue, which is why he was traded. Me, I'm just a throw-in because the Firebirds are thin at corner.

So me, Jeff, Fisher, and a couple of the other felines on defense are hanging out in the locker room after practice on Monday. It still feels stiff and awkward. Charm is there, too, going through his locker. He bangs a fist on it, making us all look over.

"Dammit," he says. "I lost my wallet."

Jeff mutters, "Horses," so low that only I hear it.

I want to be helpful, since he's gonna be my roommate and all. "Where did you have it last?" I ask.

Fisher and the other guys sigh. One of them, a leopard, leans back. "Get comfy," Fisher says.

Jeff and I glance at each other. Charm's leaning against his locker with a big grin. "Well," he says, "lessee. I know I had it yesterday after the game, because I took that leopard over to Kelly's and bought her a couple Cosmos. Now lemme think here. I set my wallet down on the bar after I paid, and I was chattin' her up. She was way into me, too. Her tail kept grabbin' my leg."

The leopard's tail curls around himself. Charm doesn't notice, or doesn't pay attention. "But I was keepin' my hand on the wallet, even when she got up nice an' close and put her claws up under my shirt. Did you guys see her?" The guys shake their heads, and I do too. "She only came up to here." He holds one massive arm just below his pecs. "But she had this great voice, all low and sexy, and she smelled like a garden."

"Like a fresh-mowed lawn?" Fisher says.

Charm ignores him. He taps a finger on his long muzzle, and it's clear now even to me that he's only pretending to think. "So she starts askin' me all these things about like do I have a girl-friend and what do I like to do. And then she like, licks her lips, and she leans in and says..." He puts on his best impression of a husky female voice. "I've got a very talented tongue."

Fisher and the leopard are grinning. Jeff looks kind of uncomfortable. I'm trying to look interested because they all still think I'm straight. "She did not say that," I say.

Charm pounds his chest. "Cross my heart. So I ask if she wants to go to the back room. Hey, Gramps, you know Kelly's has a back room,

right?" I shake my head. "Sure, right behind the phones in the hallway. They keep kegs in there but he don't mind if you use it for fifteen minutes once in a while."

"Lotsa bars have a storage room, Charm," another cheetah, a starting wideout, says dryly.

"Door locks from the inside." Charm grins. "So I show her the back room, y'know how it goes, and she musta had somewhere to be, 'cause she gets right down to business. I'm ready for her, too, so pretty soon I'm sittin' back on a keg and she's just suckin' away, pretty little spotty head bobbin' up and down." He gives a sly glance at the leopard, who doesn't react. His tail's still tightly around his own hips, but a couple of the other tails in the room have stopped curling lazily as their owners get more into the story.

"So you left your wallet in the bar?" Even Jeff is kind of getting into it. I'm not surprised; I mean, I haven't had straight sex in a couple years and I'm still getting into it. Course, my fox has a pretty talented tongue himself.

"Nah," Charm says, "'cause I remember I was sittin' on it funny and I stopped her to push my pants all the way down. Gives her paws somethin' to do, too, that way." He winks and cups his balls.

"Well, where'd you go when you finished with her?"

"Oh, I didn't just finish with her." Charm licks his lips. "Good thing that back room is loud.



A/C was goin' the whole time. She took it slow. Had me kickin' a couple of those kegs. Was about fifteen minutes before I grabbed her shoulders, held her there," he mimes this, "and let 'er rip." He looks around. "She swallowed like a pro, too."

"Did she charge like a pro?" The other cheetah, a temperamental wideout, sounds sarcastic, but his grin is surprisingly sincere.

"I ain't ever paid for it, and buyin' drinks don't count." Charm leans back against his locker.

"So," I say finally, "did you leave your wallet at Kelly's?"

"Well," he says, so quick I know he was waiting for someone to ask, "I don't think so. I mean, she took off pretty quick to clean up, and I sat there a while just chillin'. It was that good. She wasn't lyin' about her tongue. Some gals, y'know, just drop their mouth down and don't got no imagination. But this one...she licked in all the right places, used her paws real good. I give her an A-plus."

Now I'm fidgeting some, because my boyfriend is pretty good with his tongue too, and Charm's making me think of him. I focus on his words and not my memories, even though the other guys couldn't see what's making me adjust my pants, and I'm not the only one doing it anyway. "But pretty soon I pulled my pants up, and I'm sure I had my wallet after that 'cause I was buyin' drinks for this coyote," he cups his hands a foot in front of his chest, "who was just too much to pass up."

"Is anything not too much for you to pass up?" A dry voice comes from behind me. I turn and see one of the veterans of the defense, a coyote.

Charm pretends to think about that, too. "I mean, she was really too much," he squeezes his imaginary chest, "to pass up. Coach." He winks at the coyote, who is not, as far as I know, a coach.

"Bet they weren't real," Jeff says. His tail, which had stopped

during the blow job description, is flicking again.

"Oh, they were real," Charm laughs. "Listen, so I buy her a Port City Iced Tea, right, and she tells me she knows this other exclusive club where we can go. There's dancing and they make an awesome Zombie. Well, hey, I love me a Zombie, right? So we hang out for about an hour and then I say can we walk or should we take a cab, and she says let's walk, I need to change."

"Into what?" Jeff says.

"That's what I say," Charm says. "She looks awesome, y'know, got on this dress down to here, really brings out her hips. But...gals, what'cha gonna do? She wants to change, she can change. So I settle up—see, I know I had my wallet then. I remember her patting my ass on the way out and gigglin'."

"Did she pick your pocket maybe?" The other cheetah is grinning.

"Nah, wallet was in the other side of my pants. I just remember thinkin' I was glad she got that side because she got a good feel of my ass that way."

"Anyway, she takes me down a few blocks and says this is her apartment and she just wants to change, and do I want to wait down here or come up?" He grins around at us. "She's got a real nice apartment. Small, but nice. Big couch in the living room, silk sheets on the bed."

I shake my head. "You went right to her bedroom?"

"Course not! I wait in the living room. I got manners." A couple of the guys snicker at this. "Only she goes in the bedroom and then says she wants me to come tell her which dress looks better on her. So I walk in. And she's standin' there holdin' up this pretty blue thing, and I say it looks good, and then she swaps it out for this shiny pink one. And I notice as she switches the dresses that she ain't wearin' nothin' underneath. No shit. Nothin' at all."



He makes us wait. I lean back against my locker, just enjoying the story now. Fisher finally says, "So which dress did you pick?"

We all laugh. Charm says, "The pink one. But not right away. I told her I thought what looked best on her was me. And she says, well, get over here and let me try you on. So..." He stretches his arms above his head and grins, "I drop my pants and get on the bed with her. She starts out with her muzzle, and maybe she ain't quite as good as the leopard, but man, she knows how to lick it. I get my hands on those tits and push her down, and I'm fucking hard as a rock now. She moans, cause I'm pretty good with tits, y'know, and then I get on top and start givin' it to her."

He rocks his hips forward and back. All the tails in the room have gone still again. "We're takin' our time with it, goin' slow." He pauses to look at Jeff. "You know the ladies like it slow, right, Speedy?"

"Oh, I know," Jeff says. "I got no trouble with the ladies." He talks casually, but he's leaning forward pretty intently.

"Good, good." Charm looks at the other cheetah. "Cause speed ain't always good. So anyway, I'm workin' in, workin' in, gettin' right in there, and she's good an' tight, and those tits, they're awesome. She pretty much knows when I'm gonna finish, cause I lean in and say, here it comes, honey, and so she starts thrustin' her hips up at me, wiggling 'round all crazy, and pantin'.

"When I shoot my load, I make a little noise, cause you gotta let 'em know how good it is or they feel like you don't appreciate 'em. But I don't think she's even payin' attention. She's makin' some noise herself, and it just gets louder and louder. You know how like you'll be hearin' a train come from far away and you think it's close, but it just

keeps gettin' louder?" He looks around the room. "Yeah. Like that."

He pretends to look around behind him. "So I don't even hear her roommate come in."

"Ah, no way!" the wideout cheetah yells. I'm trying not to laugh, Jeff is just staring, and Fisher and the leopard are grinning like they're at a funny movie. A funny porn movie, I guess. "She's got a roommate?"

"And only one bed." Charm winks broadly.

"So," the cheetah says, "the roommate stole your wallet?"

"Hell, no," Charm says. "The first thing I know is I see this big tigress and she says, what the hell is going on?"

"You're makin' this up." Jeff says it flatly, but his ears are twitching.

I just grin. Of course Charm's making it up, but it's great, he's really into it. I can tell that the other guys have heard the story before, or something like it. So I say, "Shit, what did you do?"

He gives me a big smile, just for a second. "What can I do? I'm balls-deep in her roommate, and that coyote's still howlin' away. So I say, what's it look like? And she says, looks like fun. Right there in front of me, she starts unzippin' her dress."

He mimes though can't quite way around her, give me to

that, too, his huge arms reach all the his back. "I tell five minutes recharge my batteries here. Meanwhile, her roommate's panting and still moanin', cause I'm still playin' with her tits. I just can't let go. The tigress has to drag me



off the bed, and she tells her roommate to just chill, we'll be back soon.

"She pulls me to the bathroom, where they got this big shower, turns the water on, and first thing she does is get her paws all over my cock. Soaps it up real good, strokin' up and down. I'm holdin' her sides, and I tell you guys, if I hadn't just busted a nut, I'da come all over her right there. But even my boys need a few to catch their breath. So once I'm clean, I kneel down and start cleanin' her out like a cat does. Big licks right up there between her legs."

He sticks his tongue out for emphasis. I take advantage of the break to say, "Oh, I bet while you were in the shower with her, her roommate stole your wallet."

"You'd think!" He shakes his head sadly. "Stupid of me to leave my clothes lyin' out there with a chick I barely know. But hey, that's my weakness. Can't resist a nice pair of tits, or a naked chick with soapy paws. Specially a cat. You guys can keep your claws in. Well, mostly."

Jeff scowls back at Charm's grin, hiding his blunt claws. The other cheetah doesn't seem as annoyed by the remark. "Anyway," Charm goes on, "nah, that ain't where I lost my wallet. I was in the shower a while, 'cause the tongue ain't my strong point. I like it, and she liked it okay, but she didn't start

yowlin' until I was all ready again, and then I just picked her up and fucked her good and hard against the wall, water runnin' over us and everything."

The leopard and cheetah are grinning. Jeff is, I think, slowly catching on. Fisher's still attentive, his tail lashing again. I wonder if he's thinking of his wife. I think I remember that he's married. I wonder if he thinks I'm thinking about a tigress. I cast back in my head to remember one, in case they ask me about a name, and come up with only a high school girl I dated a couple times.

Meanwhile, Charm's giving us a couple more details about his third fuck of the night: her legs wrapped around his hips, clawmarks on his shoulder, which he shows off. And it does confuse Jeff when there are actual clawmarks there, a neat line of three scars in Charm's short fur. I can tell they're not a tiger's, because I know what my clawmarks look like, but I guess Jeff wouldn't necessarily know that.

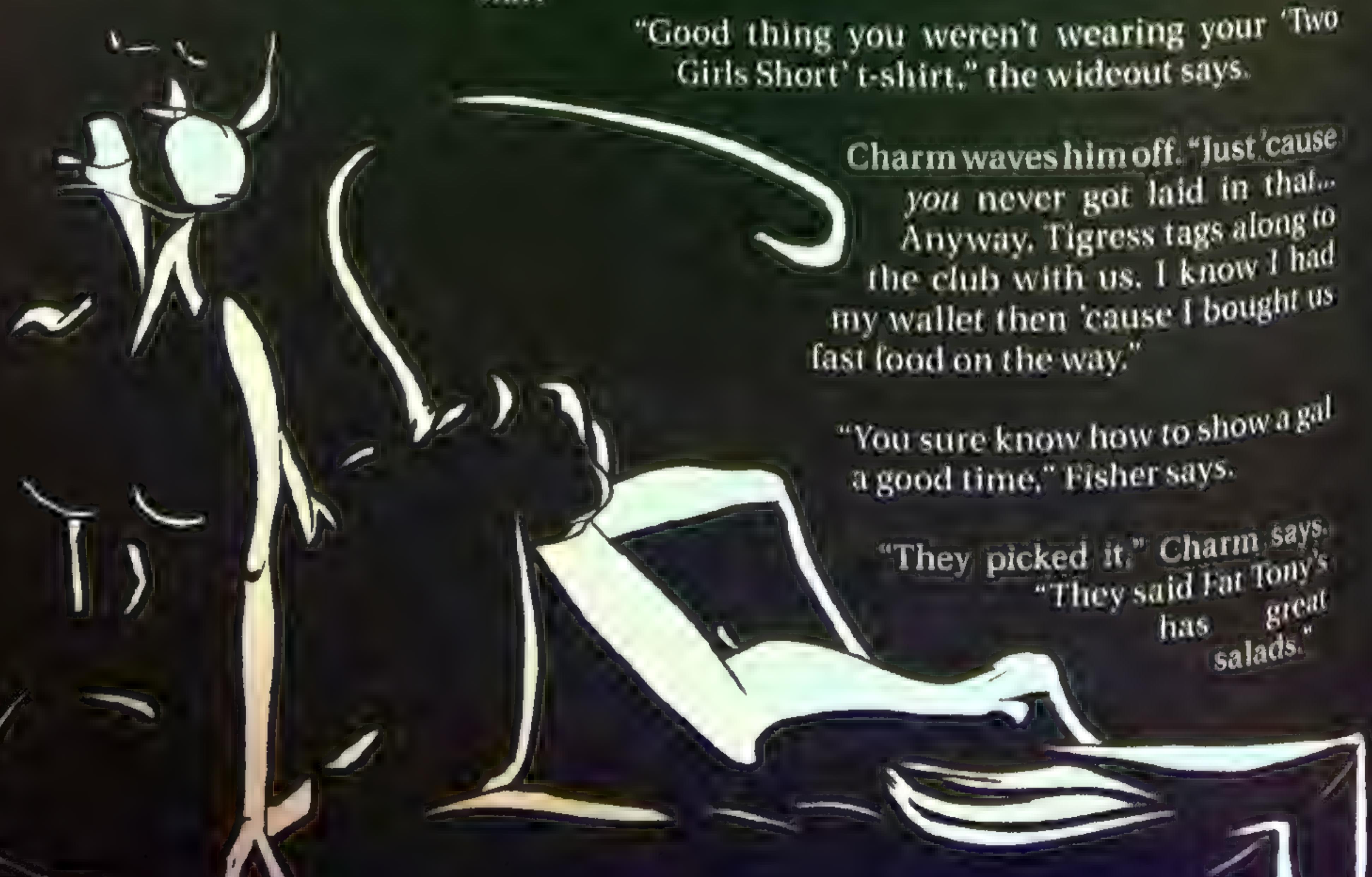
"Then," he says, "we finish up, and her roommate gets in again to clean up. We clean each other off real good, soaping all the parts that mighta got dirty," he waggles his eyebrows, "and then they get dressed again. Coyote-girl puts on her pink dress, Tigress puts on some sparkly white thing, and I just get back into my jeans and leather jacket."

"Good thing you weren't wearing your 'Two Girls Short' t-shirt," the wideout says.

Charm waves him off. "Just 'cause you never got laid in that... Anyway, Tigress tags along to the club with us. I know I had my wallet then 'cause I bought us fast food on the way."

"You sure know how to show a gal a good time," Fisher says.

"They picked it," Charm says.
"They said Fat Tony's has great salads."



No girl I know ever voluntarily went to a Fat Tony's. But it's Charm's story. I lean back and listen as he talks about this club, called "The Spot." It's so exclusive, he says, it's not listed anywhere. "You gotta know where to go. Coyote-girl, she's a model, works for one of them fashion mags, and she takes us to this warehouse. They move the club every month, tear it down and set it up again. There's a guy, he does movie lights for Hollywood, he comes and sets up the lights once a month. And the music is insane."

"Like, who was the DJ?" Jeff is now pretty sure he knows it's a story.

Charm grins. "DJs line up to play this club. Y'know the guy Emerald Jones hired to play her birthday party?"

"Yeah?"

The stallion makes a cut-off motion, a sweep with the flat of his hand. "Couldn't get in."

Jeff goes from wide-eyed awe to disbelief to skeptical curiosity. "But—"

"I dunno the name of the guy who was there," Charm says. "I met Coyote-girl pretty quick. I start dancin' with this chick, just splunder and jumpin', 'till I'm outta breath. She's heavily winded. Turns out she was an Olympic hurdles Reserve. Never quite made the team."

He claps a hand to his back pocket as he miming the dances, at which point the other cheetah says, "Oh, so your wallet tell you who you were dancing."

"Maybe!" Charm pretends to think about that. "I dunno, 'cause I made out with the hurdler for like an hour. We quit dancin' and she had her tongue in my mouth pretty quick. I didn't even buy her a drink."

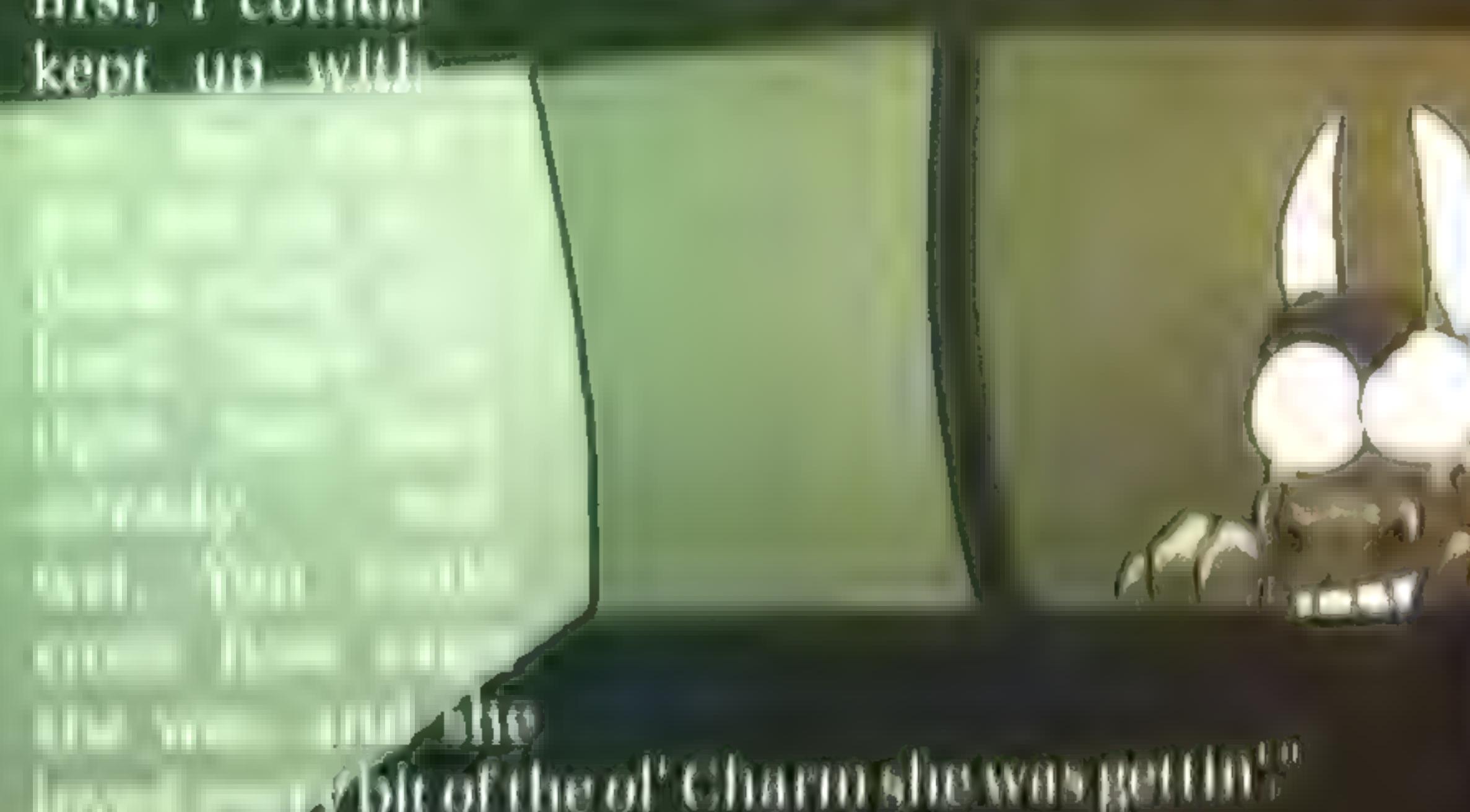
The leopard, who's been pretty quiet up to now, speaks up with a quiet drawl. "I thought you said athletes didn't have good tits."

"Yeah, she didn't," he says. "S'okay, though, she had awesome legs and the tightest ass you ever saw. Or felt." He squeezes air with his hands again.

"So, what?" Fisher says. "You just made out? Musta been pretty tired by then."

"Four times fit one night ain't nothin'" Charm says. "The kissin's pretty good, and Iova feelin' her ass, and she rubs herself right into my junk. Like we're dancin', see?" We all nod as he looks around, letting him know that we do see. "Then she says she wants to get outta there, she's got a room around the corner and she wants to take me there so we can 'go the distance'."

I keep my groan inward. Charm's so delighted by the pun that I can't bear to do anything but join Fisher and the other guys with their appreciative "ooooh." The stallion loves the reaction, and says, "I liked that too," as though it really were some girl who'd said it and not something he'd made up. "So we get outta there and walk over to her condo. Big luxury place. Dining room, living room. I don't see much of it though. We go straight to the bedroom and she gets outta her dress while I rip my pants off." He pauses. "Whew! I tell ya, I'd been the first, I coulda kept up with—



bit of the of' Charm she was gettin'"

Jeff looks kind of uncomfortable, like he's not sure he should be enjoying it. Everyone's watching Charm closely now, so I don't think anyone but me notices. "I tell you, guy," he says wistfully, "the way she slid herself up and down on me, those tight legs, and the claws... I ain't never had anything like it. I grabbed her hips, but I couldn't hardly hold on. It was like she was tryin' to escape, and I just had to keep... jammmin' her down." Each of the last words is accompanied by a thrust of his hips into Jeff's imaginary partner. "I thought it wasn't ever gonna end. But it was the best of the night, and gonna end. But it was the best of the night, and if I hadda guess from the way she screamed, it say it was the best of her night, too. Probably her month."

We let the silence stretch on when he pauses. He looks off dreamily, and then says, "If only her husband didn't pick right then to come home."

Jeff is so startled he nearly falls off the bench. The other guys, though they seem to have been expecting this, react appropriately, with "oh shit!" and "no fucking way!" I chime in with an exclamation of my own.

Charm gives us a knowing nod. "Yeah," he says. "Cheetah-girl yells that she'll be right there. She pops right off me, jumps down, grabs my clothes, and tosses them out the window before I can even get off the bed. Quick, she whispers, get out there! She's pointin' to the window.

"Meanwhile, I can hear her husband movin' around in the dining room, fixin' himself a drink or something. Cheetah-girl is messing with perfumes, dumping 'em all over the bed, and she hisses at me to get out again. Well, hell, I think, we're only three floors up, and I hope there's a fire escape or something. I don't figure she'd have just thrown out my clothes, right? So I hustle for the window and squeeze through it. And it's about as tight a fit as my cock in her muff. Ain't near as much fun, though.

"I get through, close the window, and feel around. There's a fire escape, sure enough, and my clothes are there."

"Oh," Fisher says, "ya know, I bet the wallet fell out when she grabbed your pants. Happens to me all the time when I'm runnin' out the back door of my mistress's place."

"Y'know," Charm says, "I bet you might be right. I don't even notice, when I pull my clothes on, 'cause I'm watchin' through the window. The husband comes in, big cheetah in a business suit, and I think he's an athlete, too. I mean, when he sees her naked, lyin' in the big perfumed bed, he gets his clothes off pretty fast, and he's got a good bod." He shrugs. "Athletic. So I watch the two of them fuck. I figure, I earned it, and a couple times Cheetah-girl looks toward the window like she knows I'm watching. So she don't mind."

"Dunno," Jeff says. "I can't watch other people having sex."

"Y'oughta try it first." Charm winks at him, which seems to unsettle the cheetah even further. Jeff shuts up fast.

"I almost jerked off there on the fire escape," the stallion goes on. "I mean, she's goddamn sexy, even if she is pretty flat. But the boys deserve a rest, so I just enjoy the show, and when they're done, they go out into the living room and I go down the fire escape.

"I can't find the club again, so I just grab a cab back to my place and pass out. And you know," he says, tapping the side of his long muzzle, "I reckon I didn't lose my wallet at her place. 'Cause I bought myself a coffee this morning." He snaps his fingers. "Come to think of it, they just called me an hour ago to tell me I left it there."

Jeff sputters a little. The rest of us burst out laughing. "Awesome," I say.

"Woo," the cheetah wideout says. "I need to go take a cold shower now." He strolls off with Fisher, and Jeff follows them a moment later.

I stand up, and so does the leopard. The coyote who'd come in behind us steps up to me and holds out a paw. "Gerrard Marvell," he says, "middle linebacker."

"I know," I say. I shake. "Devlin Miski, corner."

He looks me up and down. "Need to drop some weight to keep up at corner," he says. "Carson, you up for dinner?"

The leopard nods, and the two of them take off. I lean back against my locker, doubts flooding my mind again. The pro game is so much faster. I don't know if I can keep up. I need to go home and call my fox, have him reassure me that I belong here.

But Charm's looking at me expectantly. I push those thoughts away and force a smile. "Great story," I say.

He claps me on the shoulder. "Glad you liked it, Gramps. Want to grab a burger? I know this great place."

"Sure." We walk out of the locker room slowly. As we push through the door of the stadium to the cool air outside, I say, "Hey, is that club real?"

"Oh yeah. Read about it in a magazine once."

"That'd be cool."

"Hey," he says, "you seein' anyone?"

I hesitate. "Not really."

"All right. Next time I go out, I'm bringin' you."

"I'm not really into the whole threesomes thing," I say. On the Dragons, a couple guys used to go out to bars and drag me along. I had to pretend to strike out, and did that so much they started calling me "Whiff." Which isn't a really good football name—you don't wanna whiff on a tackle. Do that too much and you get cut. Or traded.

"Wouldn't be a threesome," he says. "Two twosomes. C'mon, I put the tigress in for you."

"Not Fisher?"

He snorts. "He's married, he don't go for that shit."

"I dunno. He seemed to be pretty into it."

"He's really old. Not like us."

I laugh. "You call me 'Gramps'."

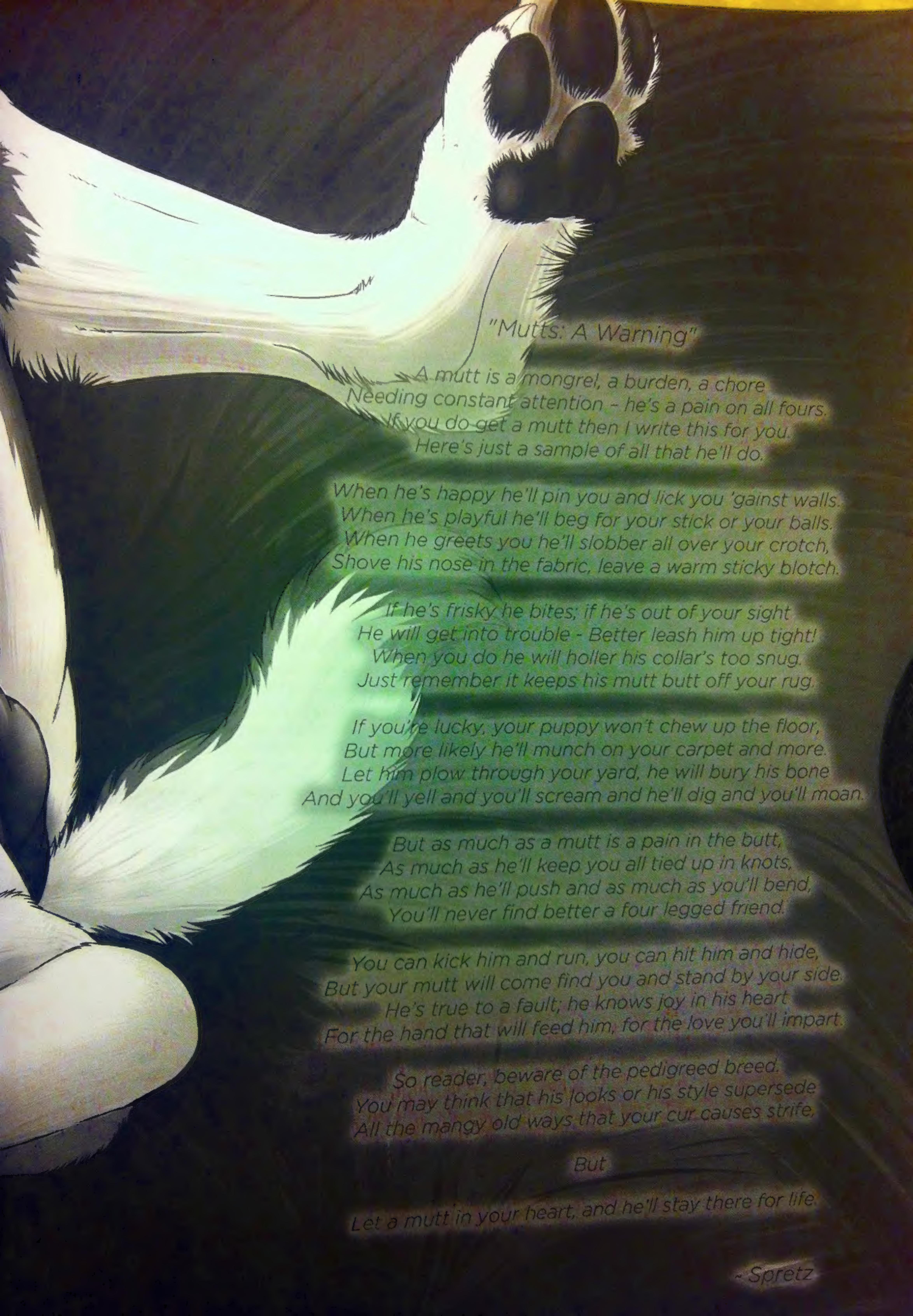
"Well," he says, "you're *old*. Just not *really* old."

"Fuckin' kids," I say. "You're buyin' dinner. As long as you don't lose your wallet."

He laughs and punches my shoulder, and we walk on down the street together. And when I think of it, the road trip and the season ahead don't seem so bad at all.







"Mutts: A Warning"

A mutt is a mongrel, a burden, a chore
Needing constant attention - he's a pain on all fours.
If you do get a mutt then I write this for you.
Here's just a sample of all that he'll do.

When he's happy he'll pin you and lick you 'gainst walls.
When he's playful he'll beg for your stick or your balls.
When he greets you he'll slobber all over your crotch,
Shove his nose in the fabric, leave a warm sticky blotch.

If he's frisky he bites; if he's out of your sight
He will get into trouble - Better leash him up tight!
When you do he will holler his collar's too snug.
Just remember it keeps his mutt butt off your rug.

If you're lucky, your puppy won't chew up the floor,
But more likely he'll munch on your carpet and more.
Let him plow through your yard, he will bury his bone
And you'll yell and you'll scream and he'll dig and you'll moan.

But as much as a mutt is a pain in the butt,
As much as he'll keep you all tied up in knots.
As much as he'll push and as much as you'll bend,
You'll never find better a four legged friend.

You can kick him and run, you can hit him and hide,
But your mutt will come find you and stand by your side.
He's true to a fault; he knows joy in his heart
For the hand that will feed him, for the love you'll impart.

So reader, beware of the pedigreed breed.
You may think that his looks or his style supersede
All the mangy old ways that your cur causes strife,

But

Let a mutt in your heart, and he'll stay there for life.

- Spretz



ALFTERGLOW

Spring, as I write this, is a time of rebirth and renewal, with trees budding and flowers just starting to bloom. It is exciting and energizing to see a new issue of *Heat* come together this time of year, with all of the wonderful stories, comics, poetry and art blossoming into totally unique creation. And yet, it is also the end. A process that started in the heat of summer, building through fall, and then the long, slow winter of art wrangling and editing now comes madly together with long days and frantic worry that something important must certainly have been overlooked. I am happy, excited and relieved all at once.

Also coming to an end is the process of building Sofawolf a new website. We have been working towards replacing our old site with something more fitting of the 21st century for quite some time, and hopefully by the time you read this, it will be launched. We are greatly excited to have a wonderful design by Kamui, the same artist who created the stunning cover of this issue of *Heat*. Along with the new design is an easier to use content management system and the hope that we'll be better able to keep things fresh and interesting. There are a lot of technical aspects that we will be improving upon once the basic functionality of the new site is in place, and we look forward to helping our site grow into a more dynamic and interactive place for our fans and customers.

It has now been a little over a year since we started our second decade and added that "Inc." to the end of "Sofawolf Press". In addition to the new website, we have continued to grow, to develop new products, and delve into exciting new territories of accounting! OK, so maybe the accounting is not as exciting for most folks, but it has been an adventure. We can't wait to see what is coming next in Sofawolf's future!



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pity UNICORNS
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SOON to be EXTINCT

